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AURELIUS**

EDITED BY MARCEL VAN ACKEREN



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Edited by

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Preface

Another *Companion* . . . At the beginning, the idea of editing a *Companion to Marcus Aurelius* seemed to be unattractive to me. Colleagues pointed out that this would imply an enormous amount of work and that there are already many, if not too many, companions. Not really amazed by the fact that the latter was mentioned even by those who had already edited (or written for) a companion, I started a survey that revealed to me that the initial idea was not about editing *another* companion on Marcus, but the first one. That changed my mind and I quickly realized that all of my colleagues were quite right about the amount of work this project meant. On the one hand, I had to plan the volume without being able to glance at previous companions to Marcus Aurelius and on the other, I envisaged a volume bringing together as many disciplines as necessary in order to present as much as possible of Marcus Aurelius. Therefore, I would not have been able to start or finish this without the help of many kinds of persons and I would like to thank at least some of them.

The most important gratitude belongs to the contributors. They wrote the volume, so it is theirs, not mine. As this volume tries to gather perspectives from many academic disciplines, and I am only a historian of philosophy, I sometimes was in need of the expertise of the contributors, on which to base my editorial decisions. Many contributors were enthusiastic about the volume and supported me by making helpful suggestions.

Christopher Gill was the first to convince me that such a companion would be a good idea. He intensively discussed my plans for the volume and my own work on Marcus with me. All of this was very helpful.

The Fritz Thyssen Foundation generously financed a three-year research period devoid of any administrative or otherwise distracting duties and thereby enabled me to develop my own ideas on Marcus' *Meditations* and to work on this volume.

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Though all the credit for the content of the book belongs to the contributors, without Mareike Hauer and Lee Klein there would be no book, but only an enormous amount of emails and digital files. They transformed all of this into uniform chapters and finally into a book.

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Marcel van Ackeren

Abbreviations

AE	<i>L'Année Épigraphique</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
CRAI	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
FGrHist	<i>Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker</i>
HA	<i>Historia Augusta</i>
HRR	<i>Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae</i>
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
IGR	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes</i>
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
IMS	<i>Inscriptions de la Mésie supérieure</i>
Inscr.It.	<i>Inscriptiones Italiae</i>
IvEph	<i>Inschriften von Ephesos</i>
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i>
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
MIR	<i>Moneta Imperii Romani</i>
MSS	<i>Manuscripts</i>
OGIS	<i>Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae</i>
PIR	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i>
RIC	<i>Roman Imperial Coinage</i>
RIT	<i>Römische Inschriften von Tarraco</i>
RIU	<i>Die Römischen Inschriften Ungarns</i>
RMD	<i>Roman Military Diplomas</i>
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
SIG	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i>
SVF	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i>
ThesCRA	<i>Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum</i>
TitAq	<i>Tituli Aquincenses</i>
TRH	<i>Tituli Romani in Hungaria reperti</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

The Study of Marcus Aurelius

Introduction

Marcel van Ackeren

Marcus Annius Verus was born in April, AD 121, at Rome. Under his later name, Marcus Aurelius, he is still a well known figure. How do we account for that? He was heir to the throne for 23 years (from 138) and then Roman emperor (from 161 until his death in 180). However, not all Roman emperors are as well known as Marcus beyond the small circle of ancient historians. Marcus Aurelius was also a philosopher; in fact the last important Stoic philosopher of antiquity. His philosophical work – the *Meditations* – is one of the most widely read philosophical texts from antiquity (it is not read only by scholars). Images of him, such as the equestrian statue, are familiar icons that have often been copied and which have inspired subsequent artworks. From Cassius Dio (71.1.1) and Herodian (*History of the Empire from the Death of Marcus 2, 10, 3*) to Machiavelli (*Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livy I, ch. 10*) and modern rulers, he has been considered a paragon of a good political leader. Especially since early modern times, ruling politicians, for instance Frederick the Great or Bill Clinton, have wanted to be known as enthusiastic readers of Marcus' work and have announced that Marcus is their favorite philosopher and their paradigm (whatever that means and whatever consequences that might have had – or not had – on their own actions). The figure of Marcus Aurelius has even featured in popular novels (*The World According to Garp* by John Irving) and Hollywood blockbusters (*The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964) and *Gladiator* (2000)).

1. The Conjunction of Philosophy and Politics

Marcus' reception and reputation does not rest on the two independent pillars of being an emperor and being a philosopher. It is their combination that intrigues, and has always intrigued. Most famous and influential was Plato's demand for philosopher-kings (*Respublica* 473c–e). The 'conjunction of these two things, political power and philosophic intelligence' can be obtained in two ways, for 'either philosophers become kings in our states or those whom we now call our kings and rulers take to the pursuit of philosophy seriously and adequately'. During his reign, Marcus quickly gained a reputation as the personification of a conjunction of this sort.

At first glance it is easy to see why this is so. Marcus was born into a rich and politically influential family, and his ancestors had already held high office; however, this fact alone would not have guaranteed that he became emperor. At a very young age, Marcus won the favor of Hadrian, which might be explained – at least partially – by Marcus' character. Hadrian nicknamed him *Verissimus* (the most true, *HA Marcus* 1.10, 2.1). And it was Hadrian himself who picked Marcus for the highest office. When Hadrian adopted Antoninus Pius in order for Pius to become his successor, he made Pius adopt the young Marcus in order for Marcus to become Pius' successor (*HA Pius* 4.4–7). According to his biographer, young Marcus was not only an eager student of philosophy; he literally wanted to live like a philosopher (*HA Marcus* 6.1–4). From letters, which Marcus wrote to his Latin teacher Cornelius Fronto, we also know that he preferred (Stoic) philosophy to rhetoric, which was at that time a highly respected art (*Fronto* 1.1.214, 2.66.17). That Marcus was regarded as a special, philosophical ruler is highlighted in the *Historia Augusta*, by the fact that his biography is the only one with a title that does not only list his name but also characterizes him: *vita Marci Antonini philosophi* (Life of Marcus Antoninus the Philosopher).

Although Marcus allegedly liked to quote Plato's dictum (*HA Marcus* 27.7), we may not assume that Marcus was a Platonic philosopher-king or thought of himself as such. He was less ambitious:

So set to work, if you are able, and do not look around you to see if anyone will notice. You should not hope for Plato's ideal state, but be satisfied to make even the smallest advance. . . . The work of philosophy is simple and modest; do not seduce me into vain ostentation. (*Meditations* 9, 29)

In fact, it is not clear that Marcus thought of himself as a philosopher. In the *Meditations* he bluntly states that he had 'resigned any hopes of excelling in dialectics and natural philosophy' (7, 67). Though Marcus' education was excellent, he had to abandon his plans of a life devoted entirely to philosophy.

He knew that he could not have become a professional philosopher, and he was aware that the philosophers in Plato's *Republic* need more than five decades of training before they can engage in political affairs. Hence Marcus did not regard himself as sufficiently well educated to be a Platonic philosopher-king. But there are two more substantial reasons why Marcus was not a *Platonic* philosopher-king. Plato naturally assumed that it should be *Platonic* philosophy that guides our political affairs. However, Marcus was a Stoic philosopher. Marcus' contemporaries knew that he had philosophical ambitions; but the most important and detailed source of Marcus' philosophical convictions, the *Meditations*, was – as far as we know – a completely private work. We do not have any evidence that anybody else knew about its contents or even its existence before the end of the fourth century. It is only from the work itself that we (modern readers) know for certain that Marcus was definitely a Stoic philosopher. This conviction may have been in contrast to his public actions as emperor, since in this role he did not openly favor Stoicism over other philosophical schools or above rhetoric. As an emperor he was always eager to be impartial. He founded chairs of philosophy (for Platonists, Peripatetics, Epicureans, and Stoics) and rhetoric in Athens, which were enormously prestigious positions; however, Marcus did not pick the persons who held these chairs himself (Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum* 2.2.566). In public he even avoided criticizing the Sophists openly or arguing with them (Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum* 2.1.652–53). In the *Meditations* (1, 7; 1, 16; 6, 30), however, he shows he despised them. This already indicates that, in the case of Marcus, the relation between philosophy and politics is a complex one; although Marcus had clear-cut philosophical ambitions, he somehow concealed his firm convictions, probably for the sake of his political duties. This leads to the second reason why one should not too hastily assume that Marcus Aurelius was a *Platonic* philosopher-king: Plato called for a direct application of philosophy in the realm of politics. The objects of knowledge with which the philosopher has become acquainted were also supposed to function as paradigms, that is, guidelines for his policies. Knowledge will automatically turn into politics (*Respublica* 500a–501e).

It is open to question whether Marcus really thought that philosophy had this kind of direct and dominant impact on his reign. This is not the place to decide if we can find actual traces of his philosophy in his political decisions and to pinpoint influences. It is enough to claim that, from a methodological point of view, it is very difficult to find traces of his philosophical beliefs in his political and judicial decisions. Results are rare, despite the fact that we moderns are in a better position than Marcus' contemporaries, since we know the *Meditations*. It seems more plausible to think that Marcus had some kind of confidence in philosophy, or that the philosopher Marcus was supporting the emperor Marcus by stressing that one has to do one's duty, no matter what one's nature is or what place one has in society.

If it is not the strict Platonic version of the conjunction of philosophical intelligence and political power, what kind of combination of these two things made Marcus so attractive? Marcus personifies something that has been appealing for many centuries, in which the understanding both of politics and philosophy has changed substantially many times. Although the *Meditations* do not contain any narrative of specific events or references to the current state of affairs, Marcus clearly exhibited a certain type of character or attitude towards the world and politics. Also, according to historical sources, he managed to a large extent to live up to his ideals. Marcus was given the title of ‘Caesar’ in 140 (Dio 71.35.5; *HA Marcus* 6.3) and held it for more than 40 years, that is, for more than two-thirds of his life. However, in the *Meditations*, written after more than 30 years of being a Caesar, he still worries about the effects this might have on him:

Take care that you are not turned into a Caesar, that you are not stained with purple; for such things do come about. Keep yourself simple, then, and good and sincere, dignified, free from affection, a friend to justice, reverend to the gods, affectionate, and firm in performance of your duties. Struggle to remain such a man as philosophy wished to make you. Honour the Gods, protect your fellows. Life is short; and our earthly existence yields but a single harvest, a holy disposition and acts that serve the common good. (6, 30)

This commitment to doing his duty, simply and modestly, even when he was the most powerful person in the Roman Empire, could at least partially explain the attraction Marcus has had on readers in high-ranking positions and on those who longed for politicians like that. Thus, even if our judgments about Plato’s theory of philosopher-kings, Stoicism, and the absolute power of Roman emperors may have changed over time and are in any case matters of continuing debate, the idea that political leaders should fulfill some moral requirements and should have at least an ethically decent character is still very appealing. Consider the following quote as stark contrast: In 1948 Stalin was proofreading his *Short Biography*. In his own handwriting he added the following sentence:

Although he did his duty as leader of the party and the people with perfect virtuosity, . . . Stalin never allowed this perfection to be outshone by any kind of vanity or haughtiness or self-laudation. (Stalin (1947), 46; translation mine)

Instead of misusing his wide-ranging powers, Marcus had a philosophically based and serious interest in his character, his duty, and the world. If we compare Marcus with Stalin, and other examples of political degeneration or if we compare him with much better examples of leadership, many people can still appreciate Marcus’ attitude. But, leaving aside these speculations about why

Marcus Aurelius is still a popular figure today, let us turn to the picture of Marcus offered by recent scholarship.

2. Scholarship on Marcus Aurelius

The first and most important fact about academic literature on Marcus Aurelius is that there is no single body of research on Marcus. In the modern period, the academic world has become highly specialized and this applies to work on Marcus Aurelius.

Sometimes it is claimed that scholarship on ancient history has evolved, bringing a shift of focus from the great actions of major rulers to social structures and cultures. It is also sometimes stated that scholarship on ancient philosophy has shifted from focusing on certain central texts by major philosophers to exploring new topics and periods and neglected texts. If these generalizations are true, how do they bear on Marcus Aurelius and scholarship on him?

The first development has not affected the study of Marcus Aurelius. He might not be as important and influential as Julius Caesar or Augustus, but Marcus Aurelius still belongs to the group of so-called ‘great men of history’ who have fascinated people during their lifetime and have been remembered, or even achieved iconic status, afterwards. Correspondingly, academic interest in Marcus the emperor has been and remains lively. This also holds true for the various disciplines concerned with Marcus. There has been and still is ongoing research regarding coins, architecture, art, and epigraphy as well as the political, cultural, or judicial aspects of Marcus’ reign. Our knowledge of Marcus the emperor has deepened, partly due to new archaeological discoveries (for instance in Turkey or Austria), but also due to the ongoing and improved study of sources such as the *Historia Augusta* and the work of Cassius Dio.

As regards the second general trend noted earlier, the broadening of focus in the study of ancient philosophy, the position is more complex and uneven as regards work on Marcus’ *Meditations*. Since the earliest editions and translations, the *Meditations* have been widely read, if not being exactly popular. But there has not been corresponding scholarly interest, at least until very recently.

The older research was primarily interested in the form of the *Meditations* (e.g. Hirzel (1895)) and at same time often ignored or devaluated the content; it thus mirrored Seneca’s complaint that ‘what was philosophy has become philology (*quae philosophia fuit, facta philologia est*)’ (*Epistula* 108, 23). The *Meditations* were taken to be ‘traditional in content, but original in form’ (Zuntz (1946)).

Even nowadays scholarship is often divided between philological and philosophical studies, each addressing their respective topics, and, until very recently, philological research was the overly dominant branch. And both

types of studies do not only provide analysis and accounts; they were also driven by evaluations. Judgments have been made about Marcus' capacities as an author, since some have admired the effect his self-addressed words can have on the reader, but more often his work has been regarded as dull, unimportant, badly written. A group of scholars did not rate Marcus the philosopher very highly for the contents of the book were explained in terms of the many bodily or psychological diseases its author is alleged to have had (see the summary in van Ackeren (2006) 54). And sometimes it has simply been denied that Marcus can be regarded as a philosopher, because the content and style of his *Meditations* are not what one expects from academic philosophy (for instance, Rist (1983)).

But there has been other, new, and stimulating research treating Marcus as a serious and interesting philosopher. After an important commentary by Farquharson (1944) and the brilliant study by Rutherford (1989), the works by P. Hadot (1998, original French 1992) have put Marcus Aurelius the philosopher on the agenda. In the modern context too, we have witnessed a renaissance of practical philosophy, in particular practical ethics. In turn the older interest in the ancient forms of life (see Rabbow (1954) and I. Hadot (1969)) was revived and turned in new directions (e.g. by Foucault (2005)). For these or independent reasons, Hellenistic philosophy and the Roman Stoics have been rehabilitated. Given these developments, it seems quite natural that scholars have finally engaged more fully with the philosophy of the *Meditations*. There also has been a growing interest in specific aspects of Marcus' philosophy, e.g. his anthropology and his notion of the relation of physics and ethics (e.g. Annas (2004); Gill (2007a and b)).

Nonetheless we still lack a unified scholarly account of Marcus Aurelius. And we do lack it in many respects. There is no unified description and analysis of his philosophy that pays attention to all aspects and no unified account of the relation of form and content of the *Meditations* (see the attempt in van Ackeren (2011)). There is no overall analysis of how his philosophy relates to other aspects and disciplines. This volume is the first to try to combine all this.

With Marcus Aurelius, there is more to be found than philosophy, politics, and possible connections between these two areas. There have been specialized studies of topics which go beyond these spheres. Usually, students and scholars alike approach their chosen topic from an angle which is specific to their discipline. This can be an effective method, for Marcus as for other topics, and the results speak for themselves. But closer scrutiny shows that Marcus Aurelius is special for another reason. He seems to be a unique figure because there are an extraordinary number of disciplines which bear on Marcus Aurelius: history, numismatics, epigraphy, sociology, archaeology, philosophy, history of law, art history, social studies, philology, political studies, theology, and religious studies. A situation of this kind, even with fewer disciplines involved, usually

leads to conferences and studies under headings such as ‘interdisciplinarity’, ‘multi-disciplinarity’, or ‘trans-disciplinarity’. Such terms imply the existence of quite distinct disciplines (an assumption which is not always valid). In the case of Marcus Aurelius it is obvious that research combining several academic disciplines is highly desirable. It is also clear that Marcus Aurelius has often been neglected from this standpoint (Barnes and Griffin (1997)) and attempts to form a synthesis are rare (Klein (1979) and van Ackeren, Boschung, and Opsomer (2012)). That is the rationale for the project of this *Companion*.

3. This Volume and Its Aims

As there is no previous collection that tries to give an overview of every essential facet of contemporary studies on Marcus Aurelius, this volume tries to fill that gap. Since it is a compendium, the volume has interdisciplinary ambitions, but it also aims to show the specialist work being done in different areas. Thus, some chapters necessarily overlap with others as regards the material or texts they refer to; but they are written from different angles, dealing with different questions which are sometimes specific to a certain academic discipline.

The first section of the book offers a study of the core source material for the history of Marcus’ life and reign, including the reports by Cassius Dio and the *Historia Augusta*, archaeological evidence, Marcus’ own writings, such as the *Meditations* (including an account of its transmission) and the correspondence with Fronto, as well as the epigraphic record.

The second section seeks to locate Marcus’ life within his own time and place with special emphasis on the political situation and Marcus’ cultural and intellectual background.

The third section has as its main focus Marcus the emperor, discussing his legislation, jurisdiction, and administration, as well as the wars and revolts that had a considerable impact on his reign. Two chapters take up questions of special interest in connection with Marcus, on the relationship between politics and philosophy in his reign and on religion, especially Christianity. The final chapter of this section aims to give an overview of the state of the Roman Empire after Marcus’ death.

Discussions of the various types of material representation of Marcus Aurelius constitute the fourth section. The column of Marcus Aurelius, the equestrian statue, coins, statues, and busts are discussed in separate chapters.

The fifth section is devoted to the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius. This will discuss the form and structure of Marcus’ text, its style and character as a kind of autobiography; the question is also raised whether the work has an oral dimension. As Marcus was a Stoic philosopher, three chapters will consider Marcus’ place within the Stoic tradition and explore his views on the main

branches of Stoic philosophy, that is, physics, logic, and ethics. Key features of his thought, namely social ethics and politics as well as questions concerning the idea of self in the *Meditations* are treated in further chapters.

The sixth and final section is devoted to the reception of Marcus Aurelius, considering to what extent he was seen as a good emperor in late antiquity and in medieval times and studying how the first translations and commentaries have contributed to the popular image of Marcus. The last two chapters examine his reception in early modern philosophy, especially in Neostoicism, and Marcus' role in contemporary philosophy.

FURTHER READING

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PART I

THE MAIN SOURCES

CHAPTER 1

Cassius Dio and the *Historia Augusta*

Anthony R. Birley

1. Cassius Dio

To construct a narrative of the reign of Marcus is far from easy. No narrative history survives that remotely resembles Tacitus' *Annals*. The most important source ought to have been the relevant part of the *History of Rome* by the Greek senator Cassius Dio, covering the period from earliest times until his own second consulship in AD 229, in 80 books.¹ Dio was well qualified to write about Marcus, being a younger contemporary and a senator. He must have been born about the year 164, since he mentions that he was designated praetor by the emperor Pertinax, that is, in 193, no doubt to serve in 194 (Dio 73[74].12.2). From this one can infer that he was then aged about 30 (cf. Dio 52.20.1–2 with Morris (1964)). Thus at the time of Marcus' death in 180, while not quite old enough to enter the pre-senatorial career, Dio would certainly have been well informed about the main events and issues of the day, especially as his father, Cassius Apronianus, was also a senator (*PIR*² C 485). Dio was a great admirer of Marcus, as shown by the long final section of Xiphilinus' epitome of Book 71, on Marcus' death, with a summing up of his life, ending with the contrast between Marcus' reign and that of Commodus: 'our history now descends from a kingdom of gold to one of iron and rust, as affairs did for the Romans at that time' (Xiphilinus 267–68; Dio 71[72].33.42–36.4).

But for Marcus' reign, which he covered in his Book 71, Dio's *History* is only available in the 11th-century *Epitome* by Xiphilinus and in some Byzantine

excerpts. Dio's Book 70, on the reign of Antoninus Pius, was already missing when Xiphilinus was composing his *Epitome*:

It should be known that the account of Antoninus Pius is not found in the copies of Dio, probably because something happened to the books, and hence the history of his reign is almost completely unknown.

He can only offer the information, repeated from his summary of Book 69, that Antoninus was adopted by Hadrian and became emperor, Hadrian's first choice Lucius Commodus (who had been renamed Lucius Aelius Caesar) having died before Hadrian himself; and that Antoninus insisted, against opposition from the senate, on Hadrian's deification, as a result of which he was given the name Pius. Dio is also cited for an alternative reason for the name, Antoninus' refusal to punish 'many who had been accused' (70.1.1–2.1).

In his summary of Dio's Book 69, Xiphilinus had reported how

Hadrian caused Antoninus, since the latter had no sons, to adopt both Lucius Commodus' son Commodus [who was renamed Lucius Verus on becoming emperor], and, in addition to him, Marcus Annii Verus, a grandson of Annii Verus, three times consul and city prefect. And while he was ordering Antoninus to adopt both, he preferred Verus on account of his kinship and his age and because he was already showing his very great strength of character, for which reason Hadrian used to call him '*Verissimus*' ['truest'], playing on the meaning of his name in Latin. (Dio 69.21.1–2)

Xiphilinus added that 'the first part of Dio's account of Marcus Verus, Antoninus' successor' was also missing:

what he did regarding Lucius, Commodus' son, whom Marcus made his son-in-law, and what the latter did in the war against Vologaesius, having been sent there by his father-in-law. Therefore I shall tell briefly what I have read about these matters in other books. (Dio 70.2.2)²

Xiphilinus' brief substitute, derived from 'other books', for the missing first part of Dio's Book 71 begins with the following: Antoninus' death after a 24-year reign; Marcus' accession and the appointment of his adoptive brother Lucius as co-emperor; and the latter's marriage to Marcus' daughter Lucilla and dispatch to the Parthian War. Next he reports how the Parthian king Vologaesius had begun the war by attacking and destroying a Roman legion at Elegeia and then invading Syria; how Lucius, based at Antioch, entrusted command to Cassius, who in due course advanced into Parthian territory and destroyed Vologaesius' palace; then that Lucius, who 'took great pride in these exploits', later plotted against Marcus but died from poison

before he could achieve anything. Although none of this came from Dio, it is conventionally labelled Dio 71.1.1¹–3.1¹. Modern editors have tacked on to this two genuine passages from Dio, quoted in the Byzantine encyclopedia, the *Suda*: one is on Roman bridge-building, in this case carried out by Cassius; the other relates how Sohaemus, the king of Armenia, first installed by Lucius in 164, was re-installed by Martius Verus, governor of Cappadocia, to which is added a laudatory character-sketch of this general. The first *Suda* excerpt clearly comes from Dio's account of Lucius' Parthian war in the 160s, but the second one must refer to an episode in the 170s. It belongs in the same context as a report taken from Dio in one of the *Excerpta Valesiana* (no. 304; Dio 71[72].14.2), on trouble in Armenia caused by a satrap called Tiridates: he had threatened Martius Verus and was deported to Britain (see *PIR*² M 348, S 761, T 239).

Apart from Cassius' bridge-building, only one other episode from the earlier part of Dio's Book 71, not available to Xiphilinus, is preserved in an excerpt. This relates the invasion of the empire by 6 000 Langobardi and Obii, their rout by cavalry under Vindex and infantry under Candidus, and the barbarians' subsequent negotiations with the governor of (Upper) Pannonia, Iallius Bassus. The episode was transmitted via Petrus Patricius (*Excerpta de legationibus*^G 6; Dio 71 [72].3.1a), and is datable to about 166 or 167, thanks to independent information about the careers of Vindex and Bassus (*PIR*² M 22, I 4).

At all events, it is clear that Xiphilinus' epitome of Dio on Marcus' reign only covers events after the death of Lucius Verus, which occurred early in 169. The same seems to apply to the collections of excerpts from Dio, principally the *Excerpta Ursiniana* 56–66 and *Valesiana* 302–312b, as well as the other passages in Petrus Patricius, and a few more in the *excerpta Salmasiana* and *Vaticana*. Not all of the events in these excerpts are easy to date and the order in the editions by Boissevain or Cary (Loeb) is not always satisfactory. The parts of Xiphilinus derived from Dio's Book 71 begin with further, introductory comments on Avidius Cassius and on Marcus. Cassius

was ordered by Marcus to administer the whole of Asia, whereas Marcus himself spent a long time, so to speak his entire life, having Pannonia as his base, making war on the Danube barbarians, Jazyges [i.e. Sarmatians] and Marcomanni, one after the other. (Xiphilinus 259; Dio 71[72].3.1²)³

Cassius' appointment 'to administer the whole of Asia' belongs to the 170s, and the proper context is the paragraph on Cassius' suppression of the Egyptian Bucoli (Xiphilinus 259–60; Dio 71[72].4.1–2).

Sandwiched between these two mentions of Cassius is Xiphilinus' account of the barbarian invasion of Italy and its repulse by Pompeianus and Pertinax (Xiphilinus 259; Dio 71[72].3.2–4). As Xiphilinus has no information from

Dio about the time before Lucius' death, this demonstrates that the invasion was later than this, in 169 or 170. The only apparent difficulty is Xiphilinus' expression referring to the invaders as 'also many of the Celts from beyond the Rhine'. 'Celts', as often in Greek writers, means 'Germans', but Dio or perhaps Xiphilinus probably just added 'from beyond the Rhine' to distinguish them from the Gauls: this did not mean that the invaders actually came from that area (see Zwicker (1941) 156f.). There is no good reason to doubt that the invasion in question was that by the Marcomanni and Quadi, otherwise known only from an episode in Lucian's *Alexander* (48) and a retrospective passage in Ammianus Marcellinus (29.6.1). As to the date, comparison with the *Historia Augusta's* treatment of Pertinax's role in the latter's *vita* makes the year 170 far likelier, *Pertinax* 2.4–5:

From there...he [Pertinax] was transferred to Dacia ... and subsequently, through Claudius Pompeianus, Marcus' son-in-law, was appointed, to be, as it were, his assistant, to command detachments; in which post he won approval and was enrolled into the senate.

From the data in *Pertinax's vita*, his post in Dacia, which preceded his service under Pompeianus and was followed by a period without employment, can hardly be dated earlier than 169 (Alföldy (1987) 326ff.; Piso (1993) 117ff.).

As will be seen, virtually the whole of what remains of Dio's Book 71 dealt with warfare, most of it being Marcus' Danubian campaigns, apart from the brief mentions of the intervention in Egypt by Avidius Cassius and that by Martius Verus in Armenia; further, Xiphilinus also gave fairly full treatment to the rebellion of Cassius in 175 and its aftermath. His *Epitome* devotes most space to certain episodes: the death of the Guard prefect Vindex at the hands of the Marcomanni and their eventual defeat, giving Marcus the title Germanicus, and the revolt of the Egyptian Bucoli, suppressed by Avidius Cassius (259–60; Dio 71[72].3.5–4.2); Marcus' industriousness in dealing with court cases and his ill-health, and a battle with the Jazyges on the frozen river, with the concluding remark that 'Marcus thus subdued the Marcomanni and Jazyges after many hard struggles and dangers' (250–51; Dio 71 [72].6.1–8.1); the battle of the 'Rain Miracle' against the Quadi, into which Xiphilinus inserted the Christian interpretation (260–62; Dio 71 [72].8.1–10.5); the rebellion of Cassius and its aftermath, including Faustina's death, then Marcus' return to Rome via Athens and the renewal of the northern wars (262–67; Dio 71[72].22.2–33.4¹), followed directly by Marcus' death and a long summary of his life and reign (267–68; Dio 71 [72].33.4²–36.4). Xiphilinus (or the scribes) misplaced the second of these passages (250–51), as well as a shorter previous one with two anecdotes about

the war (249–50): they precede a string of passages from Dio's Book 69 (252ff.) and Xiphilinus' substitute summary for the missing parts of Dio, Book 70 and the first part of 71.

Some information in parts of these Xiphilinus passages is repeated in the *excerpta*, particularly the *Valesiana*, of which nos. 302–312a deal with Marcus' reign. Only nos. 304, on the treatment of Ariogaesus, king of the Quadi (see below) and the Armenian satrap Tiridates (see above), 305, on Marcus' refusal to look at Cassius' severed head, 306, on his treatment of Cassius' supporters, and 310, on his godfearingness, add anything. No. 117 of the *excerpta Salmasiana* has a brief report of the auction of imperial property in AD 169, given at a little greater length by Zonaras 12.1, both surely taken from Dio's Book 71, and best known from the detailed accounts in Eutropius (8.11) and the *Historia Augusta* (17.4–6, based on Eutropius, and again at 21.9). The most important excerpts are in the *excerpta Ursiniana*^G, 57–66, which recount mainly diplomatic activity in the northern wars. The first, no. 57 (Dio 71[72].11.1–5), describes Marcus staying in Pannonia, receiving barbarian embassies. The Quadi sued for peace, which was granted, to prevent them joining the Marcomanni and Jazyges, and they handed back thousands of deserters and prisoners. Other peoples also surrendered; some supplied troops and others were allocated lands in the northern provinces and even in Italy – but those settled in Italy later seized Ravenna and were removed, which meant that Marcus did not settle barbarians in Italy again. In no. 58 (Dio 71[72].12.1–3), it is reported how the governor of Dacia Clemens attempted to manipulate two branches of the Vandals and on the unsuccessful mission to the Cotini of the *ab epistulis* Paternus. The next excerpt, 59 (Dio 71[72].13.1–4), records the Jazyges unsuccessfully suing for peace and Marcus' refusal to recognize king Ariogaesus; one of the *excerpta Valesiana*, 304, reports Ariogaesus' eventual capture and deportation to Alexandria. No. 60 (Dio 71[72].15) has the Marcomanni sending envoys to Marcus: as they had fulfilled previous conditions, he (albeit with reluctance) reduced by half the neutral zone on the Danube left bank. Nos. 61 (Dio 71[72].16.1–2) and 62 (Dio 71[72].17) both refer to Marcus being obliged, because of Cassius' revolt, to make terms with the Jazyges, who had, indeed, sued for peace; they had to return 100 000 captives and supply 8 000 cavalry, of whom 5 500 were sent to Britain. The Jazyges are also the subject of the next excerpt, no. 63 (Dio 71[72].18), which clearly belongs to the period of the renewed war, AD 178–80: it reports that they asked for relaxation of the terms previously imposed, and that both they and the Buri sought assurances that Marcus would 'prosecute the war to the uttermost' and not make peace with the Quadi. Excerpt no. 64 (Dio 71[72].19.1–2) reports how Marcus received envoys from various peoples, who received varying privileges, including in some cases Roman citizenship or exemption from taxation or tribute; he gave favorable treatment to the Jazyges.

By contrast, in no. 65 (Dio 71[72].20.1–2) the situation of the Quadi and Marcomanni was portrayed as desperate: 20 000 Roman soldiers were stationed in well equipped forts in the territory of each people, who were suffering such hardship that the Quadi tried to migrate beyond Rome's reach to the land of the Semnones. 'But Marcus . . . blocked the passes and prevented this. Thus he did not want to acquire their land but to punish the men.' This clearly refers to the last winter of the war, AD 179–80 – it must be noted that the final sentence is Dio's own interpretation. The last excerpt from Book 71, no. 66, describes the contrasting action of 3 000 men from one of the smaller Germanic people in this region, the Naristae, deserting to Rome and 'receiving land in our territory' (Dio 71[72].21).

2. The *Historia Augusta*

As the value of what survives from Dio's history is limited, one must rely heavily on the so-called *Historia Augusta*. First, a bare description must be given of the *HA*'s nature and content. It contains *vitae*, biographies, of emperors, both legitimate and 'usurpers' (*tyranni*), and their heirs, for the years 117–285. There is a lacuna for the years 244–60: hence there are no *vitae* of Philip and Decius and their respective sons, Aemilianus, and Gallus and his son Volusian; and that of Valerian only begins after his capture by the Persians. There are 30 *vitae*: from Hadrian to Elagabalus each minor figure has a separate *vita*; from the two Maximini onwards a single *vita* covers joint rulers, and usurpers are grouped together, 32 in one *vita*, four in another. The quality of these *vitae* is very varied. The early *vitae* of legitimate emperors of the second and early third century, i.e. from Hadrian to Caracalla, seem to be mainly factual and are thought to be based mainly on a good source. This is assumed by most scholars to be the lost *vitae Caesarum* of Marius Maximus, written in the early third century as a successor to Suetonius' *Twelve Caesars*, but evidently much more extensive. But both the later *vitae*, as well as those of the secondary figures, are to a considerable extent fictional.

Apart from two other writers, to be discussed shortly, Maximus and his *vitae* are known only from references in the *HA*, which quotes his *vitae* of Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Pertinax, Severus, and Elagabalus. It also has one unspecific citation, 'as Marius Maximus says in the life of many [sc. emperors]' (*Alexander Severus* 21.4), and two comments about him. In the first, Maximus is said to have been one of those biographers who transmitted accurate information although not writing in the historians' high style (*Probus* 2.6–7). But in the second one he is castigated as 'the most long-winded man of all' (*homo omnium verbosissimus*), unlike Suetonius, who loved brevity – and because he 'involved himself in mythological history',

mythistoricis se voluminibus implicavit (*Quadrige tyrannorum* 1.1–2). Maximus' verbosity had already been exemplified: he devoted two books to his *vita Marci* (*Avidius Cassius* 9.5), even more to his *vita Severi* (*Geta* 2.1), and included extensive documents. One was taken over verbatim (*Commodus* 18.1–20.5), others are said to have been omitted as too lengthy (*Pertinax* 2.6–9, 15.8). Because the Scholiast presumably quoted Maximus' *vita Nervae*, Maximus is taken to have started his *vitae Caesarum* where Suetonius' *Twelve Caesars* ended, and to have covered Domitian's successors down to Elagabalus. He should be the *HA*'s source for the many authentic names and other details it offers on this period, their accuracy confirmed by epigraphy and by comparison e.g. with Cassius Dio.

The only other mentions of Marius Maximus occur in two late fourth-century sources. One is the Scholiast on Juvenal, who reports (on Juvenal 4.53) the condemnation of the informer Palfurius Sura after the death of Domitian, and adds three other names, 'as Marius Maximus writes'. The other is Ammianus Marcellinus, in the context of his second diatribe on morality in Rome, commenting sarcastically on the cultural deficiencies of the aristocracy. He had already written of their frivolous interests, singers and actors rather than philosophers and orators, and of their libraries, closed for ever like tombs (14.6.18). Now, he notes,

some of them, while hating learning like poison, read Juvenal and Marius Maximus with particular eagerness, turning over no volumes but these in their profound leisure – the reason for this is not a matter for my humble judgement. (28.4.14–15)

It is easy to understand Juvenal's appeal in Theodosian Rome and perhaps Marius Maximus satisfied the same taste, for scandal and trivia. Besides this, the Antonines, the essential subject of Maximus' *vitae*, were greatly in vogue. Theodosius was hailed not only as Trajan's fellow-Spaniard, supposed to resemble him physically and (negative aspects excepted) in the character of his rule, but actually as a descendant. Further, the aristocracy vaunted descent not only in a few cases from the republican nobility (Fabii, Valerii, Scipios, and Gracchi), but many more from the Antonine and Severan élite. It may be inferred that the author of the *HA* simply saw a gap in the market. Maximus was very popular, but excessively longwinded. He would produce a compact version, but spiced up by adding *vitae* of figures not treated separately by Maximus – and by 'improving' Maximus with fiction, unobtrusively tucked in, here and there, in the 'primary' *lives* based on Maximus, but wholesale in the 'secondary' *lives*. He then produced a further set of new *vitae*, beginning where Maximus left off. The early *lives*, based on Maximus, were concocted at speed, by dictation, as indeed was the

case with the whole work (see *Tyranni triginta* 33.8: 'I do not seem to have promised eloquence but fact, I who am not writing but dictating these books which I have brought out on the lives of emperors, and dictating with such haste that I . . . do not have the chance to breathe'). The need to condense Maximus, a very long source, made the author impatient in places: he cut drastically and substituted convenient summaries from Eutropius (at *Marcus* 16.5ff.) and Aurelius Victor (at *Severus* 17.5ff.). His haste, and the need to excerpt suitable parts of Maximus' *lives* for the new ones that he was adding, which are, in the part relevant to *Marcus*, the *Aelius*, *Verus*, and *Avidius Cassius*, resulted in incoherence, repetition, and muddles. With the *Marcus*, he abbreviated too much, having exploited his source to create separate *lives* of Lucius Verus and Avidius Cassius, and after using the piece of Eutropius, decided he had to add more.

Certain recurring features in the *HA* were early recognized as suspect, particularly the documents, mostly letters and speeches: only a lengthy piece attributed to Marius Maximus (*Commodus* 18.1–20.5) is now accepted as genuine. Further, besides Maximus and two Greek historians, Herodian, whose work has survived, and Dexippus, known only from fragments, the *HA* claims as sources 35 writers otherwise unknown and surely invented. Nonetheless, at 549 pages in Hohl's Teubner edition (Hohl (1927)), the *HA* is the fullest surviving Latin source for a century and a half of Roman history, and has to be used: truth must be sorted out from fiction. Despite deliberately misleading indications to the contrary – six separate authors, writing variously under the first tetrarchy or Constantine – the search has led to the age of Theodosius: the names of the six '*Scriptores*' are pseudonyms for one author, whose identity remains unknown. The indices to the manuscripts (the order is disturbed in places) attribute the *vitae* to 'Aelius Spartianus', 'Julius Capitolinus', 'Vulcacius Gallicanus, *v(ir) c(larissimus)* [i.e. a senator]', 'Aelius Lampridius', 'Trebellius Pollio', and 'Flavius Vopiscus, *Syracusius* [the Syracusan]'.

The *HA* begins abruptly with the words *Origo imperatoris Hadriani vetustior* . . . , 'the older origin of the emperor Hadrian' (*Hadrianus* 1.1). Hence it seems that a preface has been lost – damage to the manuscript, as with the lacuna, is postulated – perhaps also *vitae* of Nerva and Trajan. (Of course, given the spurious nature of so much in this work it can be argued that the work never had a Preface and that the lacuna was also a fake, the intention being to make the work seem genuinely old.) In compensation, several *lives* after the *Hadrian* have prefaces, some addressed to emperors; and rulers are addressed or referred to as alive in the body of some *vitae*. That of Hadrian's heir Aelius Caesar opens 'His Aelius Spartianus to Diocletian Augustus, greeting' and 'Spartianus' then announces his plan, 'already achieved as far as Hadrian', to compose *lives* not only of all *principes* but also of those who only became Caesar but not Augustus, further, of those 'who in any other fashion

whatsoever have attained to either the fame or the hope of the principate [i.e. usurpers]'. Shortly afterwards (*Aelius* 2.2) he refers to Galerius and Constantius as Caesars, implying a date between 293 and 305. The supposed author, of the *Marcus* (19.12) and *Verus* (11.4), 'Julius Capitolinus', likewise addresses Diocletian. Then comes the first usurper, Avidius Cassius, portrayed very positively, in the only *vita* under the name of 'Vulcacius Gallicanus', who informs Diocletian that he plans *lives* of all who had the title *imperator*, 'whether justly or unjustly, so that you, Augustus, may take cognisance of all wearers of the purple' (*Avidius Cassius* 3.3).

It was then as part of his attempt at originality that the author produced a separate *vita* of Lucius Verus, evidently hived off from Maximus' lengthy *vita* of Marcus, and, even worse, created largely fictional *vitae* of two minor figures, Aelius Caesar and the usurper Avidius Cassius. Chopping up his source got the author into a muddle: the *Marcus* goes to pieces from Verus' death in 169 onwards. The author first tried to cut his losses and finish his account by inserting a long passage of Eutropius, then decided that more was needed after all. Further items on the 170s were added, followed by some fiction. The result is that such major events as the invasions of Italy and Greece were not mentioned at all. In addition to the *Marcus* and *Verus* there is relevant information on Marcus' early life in the *Hadrian* and *Pius*, which are, fortunately, almost free of fiction, even if the former is muddled and repetitive in places. Further, there are useful items relevant to Marcus' reign in the *vitae* of Commodus, Pertinax, Didius Julianus, and Severus.

Structure of the *Marcus*:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1.1–7.4 | life up to accession, AD 121–61 |
| 7.5–14–8 | reign up to death of Lucius, AD 161–69 |
| 15.1–2 | two anecdotes |
| 15.3–19.5 | a section dealing with the reign from AD 169 to 180, derived from different sources, the major part, 16.3–18.3, being adapted from Eutropius, <i>Breviarium</i> 8.11–14, while what precedes is based partly on Eutropius, partly on Aurelius Victor |
| 19.6–11 | elaborates 19.1–5 on Commodus and Faustina |
| 19.12 | an address to Diocletian, which looks as if it marked the original end of the <i>vita</i> , followed by the words 'this of course briefly and concisely', which may well be a comment by the author, taken into the manuscript mistakenly by his stenographer: it suggests second thoughts, which led to a further section, repeating the material covered in 15.3ff. with greater accuracy and more detail |

- 20.1–28.10 the reign from AD 169 to 110, and a final chapter dealing with Marcus' death
 29.1–10 further anecdotes and comments

Structure of the *Verus*:

- 1.1–2 comment on other treatments of the joint reign
 1.3–3.7 life of Lucius Verus up to his accession, from his birth (AD 131 or 134) to AD 161
 3.8–6.6 characterization of Lucius and his conduct (mostly unfavorable)
 6.7–7.10 Parthian War
 8.1–9.6 further comments of a similar kind to those in 3.8–6.6
 9.7–11 the German expedition of AD 168 and Lucius' death (probably in January 169)
 10.1–5 anecdotes about his death and relations with his sister Fabia, his wife Lucilla and with his mother-in-law Faustina
 10.6–11.1 personalia and burial
 11.2–3 another anecdote about his death
 11.4 address to Diocletian

Structure of the *Avidius Cassius*:

- 1.1–3.5 fiction
 3.6–7 story about Marcus lecturing on philosophy before leaving for the northern war, similar to that in Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 16.9
 6.5–9.4 on the revolt, presumably based on Maximus, who is cited at 6.6, 7 and 9.5
 9.5 readers are referred for more detail to Maximus' 'second book on the Life of Marcus'
 9.6–13.5 fiction
 13.6–7 treatment of Cassius' family and their fate under Commodus
 13.8–14.8 fiction

There are dozens of personal names in both the first part of the *Marcus* and the *Verus* (discussed by Pflaum (1970) and (1976)), but the second part of the former has very few. One can only repeat that the reason is probably that the chopping up of his (no doubt very long) source to compose *vitae* of Lucius Verus and of Avidius Cassius, wore the author out or made him bored or confused. This might also explain why such an important event as the invasion of Italy, with the siege of Aquileia, is not mentioned. It could be argued that the author deliberately suppressed it, as discreditable to his

hero. It is clear that much material in the *lives* covering this period is designed to reflect favorably on Marcus – and unfavorably on Lucius Verus and Commodus. Still, it could well be that the author was muddled. Aquileia is mentioned at *Marcus* 14.1–6 when he reports on the expedition of 168,

while the Victuali and Marcomanni were throwing everything into confusion and other peoples were ready to invade if not received [sc. into the empire] . . . That *profectio* was not unprofitable, for after they had come to Aquileia, several kings retreated with their peoples and executed the authors of the disturbance.

The author may have thought that what he was describing was the siege and its relief; and indeed some modern commentators have been so persuaded.⁴

After reaching Lucius' death at *Marcus* 14.8, the author may have already turned aside to compose the *Verus*, where at 9.7–11 he reached the *bellum Germanicum* and Lucius' death again. At *Verus* 9.7–8 he reports the emperors' arrival at Aquileia and their crossing the Alps; then at 9.9, he refers to his previous treatment:

regarding this war – what was accomplished by the envoys, *legatos*, of the barbarians and what was achieved by our generals, *duces* – has already been very fully discussed in the *vita Marci*.

This suggests that he had already written his *Marcus*. In fact, *Marcus* 14.4 merely registers how 'several barbarian (peoples) sent (ambassadors) to the legates, *legatos* [i.e. governors] of the emperors'; and there is no detail later in the *vita* about what was 'achieved by our generals', let alone a very full discussion. Instead, a very abbreviated account of Marcus' life from AD 169 onwards follows, *Marcus* 15–19, beginning with inconsequential sentences, on how Marcus read and wrote during circus spectacles, 15.1, and on the power of the freedmen Geminus and Agaclytus, 15.2 – perhaps that passage was only added because the author remembered that at *Verus* 9.3–4 he had prefaced his remarks about the power of Geminus and Agaclytus with 'as we said in the *Life of Marcus*'. After reporting Lucius' deification at 3–4, he has a passage, 5–6, close to Victor, *De Caesaribus* 16.5–8: the rumor that Marcus poisoned Verus. Immediately after this is the abrupt remark at the end of 15.6: 'Cassius defected from Marcus after Verus' death'. Here is a clue that the author had again laid aside his *Marcus*, this time to compose the *Avidius Cassius*. Cassius played an important part in the Parthian War, so had already received mentions at *Verus* 7.1 and 8.3. Most of the *Avidius Cassius* is fiction, but 7.1–9.4 seems to be

taken from a good source, spoiled by the anachronistic insertion (the words ‘about Pertinax and’ at 8.5, when reporting comments by Marcus). This long passage is followed by 9.5:

if anyone wishes to know about all this history, let him read the second book of Marius Maximus on the life of Marcus, in which he tells what Marcus did alone when Verus was already dead.

After this, fiction takes over again for the remainder of the *vita*, 9.6–14.8, except for 13.6–7, the treatment of Cassius’ family and their fate under Commodus.

To return to the *Marcus*, 15.6 is followed by a long sentence, 16.1, registering Marcus’ generosity to all his family, especially to Commodus; 16.2 is on their joint triumph at the end of AD 176. Most of 16.3–17.6 is very close to Eutropius 8.11.1–2 and 12.2–14.1. All eight sections of 18 look like sententious padding by the author, while 19.1–11, on Faustina and gladiators, is almost entirely fiction elaborated from Victor, *De Caesaribus* 16.2. Chapter 19 ends with an address to Diocletian, 19.12, then the words *et quidem haec breviter et congeste*, ‘this of course briefly and concisely’. These words may well be an aside, mistakenly taken into the text by a stenographer. At all events, evidently feeling that he had been too brief, the author started again, at 20.1, to cover Marcus’ life from AD 169 to 180. First he reports Marcus’ critical statements about Lucius in the senate, his generosity to the latter’s family and freedmen and his sensitivity about his own reputation (20.1–5). Then he seems about to resume a narrative, with Marcus’ departure for the front, *profectio*, on the eve of which came the marriage of his widowed daughter to Claudius Pompeianus, to which is noted Lucilla’s and her mother’s unfavorable reaction, 20.6–7. But first there is an interruption: the invasion of ‘all the Spains’ by the Moors and ‘successes achieved though his legates’, with no names or further details, 21.1, then the revolt of the Bucoli in Egypt and its suppression by Cassius, 21.2. After reverting to the delayed *profectio*, the death of Marcus’ younger son Annius Verus Caesar is reported, with the restricted mourning and posthumous honors, 21.3–5. But instead of going on to report where Marcus went when he finally departed in autumn 169, and what he did next, the author reverts to the preparations for war, presumably undertaken in spring and summer of that year: because the plague was still raging, Marcus renewed the cult of the gods very diligently and recruited slaves for military service, 21.6; he also armed gladiators, and made Dalmatian and Dardanian bandits into soldiers; he armed *diogmitae* (local policemen in the east) too and even purchased German mercenaries to fight against Germans, 21.7. Besides this, he prepared the legions with all diligence for the German or Marcomannic war, 21.8. The auction of imperial treasures in the Forum of Trajan, already

described in some detail at 17.4–7, in part of the passage based on Eutropius (8.13), is briefly reported again, 21.9, with an acknowledgment that he is repeating himself, ‘as we have said’, *ut diximus*.

At this point one would have expected an account of the next five campaigning seasons, AD 170–74. But the author was either unable or unwilling to tackle this. Instead, he jumps to what must be the aftermath of the invasion of Italy, when the Marcomanni had been chased back north, in AD 171: ‘he wiped out the Marcomanni at the very crossing of the Danube and restored the plunder to the provincials’, 21.10. The preceding invasion of Italy by the Marcomanni and Quadi is not mentioned, just a ‘conspiracy’ of all the peoples beyond the northern *limes* (several names are hopelessly corrupt in the MSS) – as well as the threat of a Parthian and a British war, 22.1. J. Burian, perhaps rightly, regards this list as drawn from a geographical source and reflecting the concerns of the author’s own time (Burian (1987) 117). Most of the rest of 22, viz. 2–9, deals with the northern wars but with no hint of chronological order. At 22.10–11 there is suddenly brief mention of disturbances among the Sequani, 22.10, and in Lusitania, 22.11. Only at 22.12 is a datable event mentioned, the summoning of Commodus to the *limes* and his assumption of the *toga virilis*, which *Commodus* 2.2 allows one to assign to the Nones of July 175, as well as his designation to the consulship, which was to be held in AD 177.

The passage from 23.1 to 24.3 deals mainly with legal measures from the reign. At 24.3 the author suddenly reverts to the war, citing first Marcus’ equitable treatment of enemy prisoners and the settling of ‘countless numbers’ of them on Roman soil, then, at 24.4, in only 15 words in the Latin, ‘by his prayers he summoned a thunderbolt from heaven against a military device of the enemy and obtained rain for his men when they were suffering from thirst’, in other words the Lightning and Rain Miracles. These are depicted in scenes 11 and 16 of the Aurelian Column, while the Rain Miracle was the subject of a long passage in Xiphilinus. The remaining narrative covers the period from spring 175 to Marcus’ death in March 180, 24.5–28.10. Much of this, up to 27.5, is relatively detailed. It begins with Marcus’ wish to make a province of *Marcomannia*, likewise of *Sarmatia*, and the claim that he would have done this had not Cassius rebelled, 24.5. Cassius’ coup, its background and end, the journey to the east, the return to Rome via Athens, the triumph and the promotion of Commodus, with *congiarium* and spectacles, are treated fairly fully, 24.6–27.5. The latter section ends with a curt remark, ‘he corrected many civilian matters’, exemplified by the measure limiting the price of gladiators, 27.6; then come Marcus’ supposed regular quotation of Plato’s philosopher-king ideal, 27.7, and the marriage of Commodus. The final expedition, from August 178 to March 180, is allotted two sentences only, 27.9–10, the second being the claim that ‘if he had survived for one year he would have made provinces out of them [the Marcomanni and their neighbours, and the

Sarmatians]’, in other words, that the plan abandoned because of Cassius’ revolt had been re-activated.

The rest of the *vita* deals with Marcus’ death, 27.11–28.10, followed by stories about his wife’s lovers, 29.1–3; his oath before he returned to the war that no senator had been put to death with his knowledge, 29.4; his special fear of getting a reputation for greed, *avaritia*, 29.5; then some mild criticism – ‘they said that he was disingenuous (*fictus*) and less straightforward (*simplex*) than he seemed to be or than Pius and Verus were’, 29.6, and they also accused him of increasing the *aulica adrogantia*, ‘the arrogance of the court’, by keeping his friends away from general society and banquets, 29.7. The *vita* ends with three stray remarks: his consecration of his parents and that he even put up statues for their friends after death, 29.8; his skepticism about *suffragatores*, men who canvassed for support, 29.9; and how (Ceionia) Fabia (his original betrothed, Lucius’ sister) wanted to marry him after Faustina’s death, but that he took a concubine so as not to give so many children a stepmother, 29.10.

To sum up: the second part of this *vita* is well below the standard of the first part. As pointed out by Burian, the *HA* clearly shows in other *vitae*, as well as in this one, that its composition had no fixed principles, and hence that there are not only doublets but doublets that are mutually contradictory. He concludes that the account of these wars in the *HA*, although substantial, provides no firm basis for the reconstruction of events; the biographer did not set out to supply a full and accurate history of the Marcomannic wars, but to use these wars to portray the character and achievements of Marcus and to influence his readers to view the problems of his own time in the same way as himself (Burian (1987) 118).

NOTES

1. Now known from a military diploma issued during his second consulship in AD 229 to have been called Lucius Cassius Dio (*RMD* no. 133). He is also given the additional name ‘Cocceianus’ in some Byzantine sources, but this is probably the result of confusion with his namesake and fellow-Bithynian, Dio ‘Chrysostom’ of Prusa (see Gowing (1990)).
2. This is followed by comments on Antoninus’ dealings with Christians, his peaceful death, and the report of an earthquake in the Hellespont area and Bithynia, 70.3.1–4.2.
3. Irritatingly enough, although in the Loeb edition in the left-hand margin this passage is labelled LXXI 3,1², the book as a whole is numbered LXXII, and from this point onwards, until the end of Dio’s work, the Loeb book-numbering is one ahead of that in the edition by Boissevain. To avoid confusion, Dio is therefore cited here with the Loeb numbering in brackets after that of Boissevain.
4. Thus e.g. in the Loeb edition, vol. 9, p. 166 n. 2, where the death of the Guard Prefect Furius Victorinus and part of the army, reported at 14.5, is taken to refer to

a first attempt to repulse the invasion. Zwikker made a convincing case for these deaths being the result of plague (Zwikker (1941) 66).

FURTHER READING

The best text of Cassius Dio's *History* is that by Boissevain (1895–1931), the most convenient edition, with Greek text and English translation, is by Cary (1914–1927). For some problems in citation see above; for Dio's name see Gowing (1990). Millar (1964) remains a valuable introduction, although his view of the date of composition is arbitrary and unconvincing. Further, his assumption, that Dio was born and spent his childhood in the family's home town, Nicaea (Iznik) in Bithynia, is mistaken: as his father was a senator, he would have been obliged to live mostly at Rome, where Dio was probably born. The so-called *Historia Augusta*, best abbreviated *HA*, the 'Augustan History', is the most mysterious and controversial work in surviving Latin literature. Because it was supposedly by six separate authors it was long cited as the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (*SHA*). But since two pioneering articles by the young scholar Hermann Dessau (Dessau (1889) and (1892)), the starting-point for all subsequent research, showed convincingly that it was by a single author, writing nearly a century after the supposed date, it is preferable to omit the S. The standard text is that edited by Hohl (1927), preferable to the Loeb edition by Magie (1921–1932). Birley (1976) is an English translation of the first half of the *HA*, and the most up-to-date edition, with introduction, translation, and commentary, is by Chastagnol (1994). Research intensified in the 1960s, notably at the Bonn *Historia Augusta Colloquia*, held between 1963 and 1989, generating 13 volumes, edited by J. Straub et al., published between 1964 and 1991 (all at Bonn). They were followed by the *Historiae Augustae Colloquia, nova series*, of which 10 volumes, edited by G. Bonamente et al., have so far appeared (1991–2007, the first published at Macerata, the rest at Bari). The best monographs in English remain those by Syme ((1968), (1971a) and (1971b) [a very readable reply to diehard defenders of the early date and multiple authorship], (1983)). Needless to say, there is still not universal agreement on all the details. For a different view from Syme on Marius Maximus as a source cf. Birley (1997). Reference may also be made to Birley (1967) and (2003). The fullest as well as the most recent introduction to this subject is by Fündling ((2006) I 3–219, with bibliography, XI–CXXVIII), covering not only the *HA Hadrianus* (parts of which are relevant to Marcus), but the *HA* as a whole.

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CHAPTER 2

Archaeological Evidence of the Marcomannic Wars of Marcus Aurelius (AD 166–80)

*Thomas Fischer**

1. Preliminary Remarks

After long years of relative peace on the northern borders of the Roman Empire, the Marcomannic wars (AD 166–80) suddenly plunged the Empire into a serious crisis. The heavy losses incurred in these fights brought the Empire to the brink of catastrophe and ironically occurred during the reign of the ‘philosopher on the throne’ Marcus Aurelius (AD 161–80). This most difficult political trial of Marcus Aurelius’ reign involved not only a dangerous two-front war fought on the eastern border with Parthia and on the northern border at the Donau, but on top of that also the pestilence which had been introduced into the Empire from the East. In historiography, the prolonged military conflicts of these wars are seen as marking the turning point from the ‘golden age’ of the Middle Empire to the relatively dark periods of the Crisis of the Empire during the third century AD and Late Antiquity. The historical and epigraphical material on the Marcomannic wars is not very abundant, but has increasingly been amended by archaeological records (Böhme (1975) 153; Friesinger et al. (1994); Kehne (2009)). This chapter will demonstrate how the historical information on the Marcomannic wars can be comprehended and occasionally validated with the help of the present archaeological evidence.

It is obvious that the knowledge of the archaeological find places connected to the Marcomannic wars is very much dependant on the state of research in the region and cannot mirror historical reality. This is aptly illustrated by the fact

that many relevant find places are known from Raetia, which was only marginally affected by the destructions of the wars. In contrast to this, Pannonia, which was at the centre of the fights, still is archaeologically underrepresented – as is Northern Italy. A first comprehensive synopsis of the state of research was presented by H.-W. Böhme (Böhme (1975)), the latest attempts are more recent (Fischer (2009); Komoróczy (2009)).

2. The Marcomannic Theater of War

The main theater of the war with the Marcomanni from Bohemia and their Germanic, Sarmatian, and other allies can safely be assumed to have been in the Noric-Pannonian part of the Danubian border on both sides of the river (Böhme (1975); Friesinger et al. (1994); Komoróczy (2009)). But northern Italy too had to endure the ravages of war for the first time after the Civil War following the death of Nero in AD 68/69: the provincial town of Opitergum/Oderzo was destroyed by the barbarians penetrating into the Empire and Aquileia was besieged (Kehne (2009) 104) – a truly shocking event for contemporaries. Even a special force for the protection of the Alpine region and Italy (*praetentura Italiae et Alpium*), hastily assembled in the Eastern Alpine region in AD 168, was unable to prevent these events (Böhme (1975) 160). After this catastrophe, the protection of Italy was strengthened by the formation of two new legions (Leg. II and III Italica). The latter legion (Leg. II Italica) was shortly camped in Locica near Celje in Slovenia, before being sent to the Danubian border to protect Noricum (Böhme (1975) 169–71). The – fairly imprecise – historical information furthermore informs us that Raetia, to the west of the main theater of war, also was affected by the Marcomannic wars of AD 166–80. A somewhat unreliable source from Late Antiquity has the later emperor Pertinax cleansing Raetia and Noricum from enemies that had penetrated it (*HA Helvius Pertinax* 2.4–6). The Leg. III Italica participated in these fights and was finally camped in Regensburg for the protection of Raetia (Fischer (1994) 350).

3. Archaeological Evidence

3.1. *Column of Marcus Aurelius*

The first and foremost monument among the archaeological evidence is of course the fantastic column of Marcus Aurelius in Rome. This 42m-high monument with its spiral of relief depicting episodes from the Marcomannic wars was largely destroyed during the Middle Ages and the interpretation of

the scenes is controversial among scholars (Petersen et al. (1896); Zwikker (1941); Waurick (1983)). Modern scholars agree that the relief on the column of Marcus Aurelius (like that on the column of Trajan) does not depict a naturalistically illustrated history of the events, corresponding with the historical sources. It is doubtful that this was ever the purpose of this monument. In addition to that, the comparison of the depictions of Roman weapons on the column with the archaeological finds shows up many distinct differences as well as some matches (Böhme (1975) 200f.; Waurick (1983); Wolff (1994) 73–83).

3.2. Coinage

The coinage of the Marcomannic wars has not been the subject of longer study yet, but W. Szaivert has published a first outline (Szaivert (1994) 497–505). He mainly relied on depictions on the reverse of coins pertinent to the subject. As a rule, these depictions follow the familiar Roman iconography of victory, well known from coins from earlier and later periods: Piles of weapons with the inscription *DE GERMANIS* or *DE SARMATIS*, *Tropaia* (some with bound prisoners averting their faces) and Victories in different attitudes. In contrast to this, the depiction of a laurel wreath is singular for the Marcomannic wars.

3.3. Find Places

Apart from pictorial and epigraphical evidence, three kinds of primary archaeological data can illustrate the repercussions of the Marcomannic wars in the Roman Empire (Fischer (1994) 341f.):

1. Well documented destruction layers in Roman military or civil settlements of the second half of the second century AD, which can be dated accurately in the period of the Marcomannic wars. Ideally, these are larger features, excluding the possibility of a locally limited destruction by a common fire.
2. Hoard horizons dated by their latest coin into the second half of the second century AD.
3. Newly erected and sometimes only shortly occupied camps, which may be linked to the Marcomannic wars. Precise dating of the camps by several archaeological methods independent from each other is an important prerequisite for a correct evaluation here.

On the basis of some prominent examples, I would now like to present some find places, starting in the west and going eastwards. Most places can be linked with some certainty to the destruction of the Marcomannic wars, while others are less securely dated.

Raetia

Direct and indirect traces of the Marcomannic wars were mainly found in the eastern part of Raetia, on the Danubian border between Böhming (LK Eichstätt) and Straubing. In addition to coin hoards dated to the period of the Marcomannic wars with differing accuracy (Fischer (1994) 347f.; Fischer (2009) 109), there are many places with destruction layers dated securely by coins, relief-decorated Terra Sigillata and inscriptions. The find situation in Regensburg is especially characteristic, because different find contexts provide a clear picture, which may be used as a standard for less consistent find places.

Raetia seems not to have been affected as a whole by the Marcomannic wars, as archaeological research suggests that the destruction from this period was regionally contained. The archaeologically well-documented forts of Künzing and Passau do not exhibit the Marcomannic destruction layers so typical of Regensburg and Straubing, which points to the fact that the Germanic invasions only involved the eastern Limes of Raetia and the Danubian border from Böhming to Straubing.

Up to now, Marcomannic destruction layers were excavated in the interior of Raetia only in Gauting (a massive layer) and quite likely also in Augsburg. It is possible to conclude from this regional distribution of the destruction that the enemy did not come from the eastern theater of war on the middle part of the Danube via the Roman Danube road, but apparently chose to use the natural mountain passes from the Bohemian region into the Danube valley and from there advanced onwards into the interior of the province. This natural road of the Cham-Furth gap leads from the Bavarian Forest and the Bohemian Forest along the valley of the River Regen towards Regensburg and through the Stallwang gap towards Straubing. This is especially interesting since Regensburg and Straubing, both lying at the end of the natural road from Bohemia, were the only places on the Raetian Limes safeguarded with remarkable strength by two contemporary forts even before the Marcomannic wars. The subsequent events of the Marcomannic wars fully vindicated these precautions – one might even say that they let them appear not prudent enough. Considering this geo-strategical background, the stationing of the Legio III Italica in Regensburg opposite the river mouth of the Regen after the Marcomannic wars becomes logical: This was the invasion route from Bohemia. At the same time, one could also control another ancient invasion route from Central Germany along the valley of the Naab, which joins the Danube near Regensburg (Fischer (1994) 350).

Böhming

The most westernmost place where destruction layers connected to the Marcomannic wars have been found is the small fort of Böhming in the valley of the Altmühl river. Previous speculations on this (Fischer (1994) 345; Fischer

(2009) 111) were confirmed by a recent MA thesis from Cologne (Gnade 2010) (as yet unpublished).

Regensburg

Regensburg is the only find place that conforms to all points of the catalogue on the methodological sound identification of evidence for Marcomannic destruction layers listed earlier. Three regions in the city are linked to the events of the wars:

1. The older fort Regensburg-Kumpfmühl (Kohortenkastell) and the *vicus* (village) surrounding it.
2. The so-called ‘Donausiedlung’ (Danube settlement), another fort near the Danube with both a *vicus* and a cemetery to the north.
3. The legionary camp Reginum of the Legio III Italica and the *canabae legionis*, which replaced and partly covered the forts and *vici* of Kumpfmühl and Donausiedlung destroyed in the wars.

The most obvious confirmation of violent destruction comes from both the fort and *vicus* of Regensburg-Kumpfmühl, where large areas with thick layers of conflagration and destruction have been repeatedly found, excluding the possibility of a locally limited destruction by a fire not caused by the enemy. In addition to that, the destruction layer both in the fort and the *vicus* is speckled with small arms (the heads of arrows and bolts) and small parts from both armor and helmets, pointing to its origins during a battle. The latest coin from this destruction layer is a burnt bronze coin minted in AD 171/72.

A characteristic find from the destruction layer that can be dated with some accuracy is the relief-decorated Terra Sigillata. The Lezoux wares found in Regensburg-Kumpfmühl disappear after the Marcomannic wars, while the early Rheinzaubern ware is still found in the early contexts of the legionary camp of Regensburg. This characteristic spectrum of relief-decorated Terra Sigillata can be found associated with the Marcomannic wars from here to Pannonia.

Another find connected to the end of the fort is a hoard found in the western part of the fort. It contained 25 aurei from Nero to Antoninus Pius, plus 610 denarii from the Republican era to Marcus Aurelius and three bronze coins with a terminus post quem of AD 166. The coins were deposited in a bronze cauldron together with silver and gold jewelry and a silver miniature vessel.

Legionary Camp Regensburg/Reginum

After the end of the Marcomannic wars, the Legio III Italica was stationed in Regensburg, while previously Raetia had had no legion. Scholars agree that this was a reinforcement of the border defenses in reaction to the events of the

Marcomannic wars. The location of the camp at the confluence of both the rivers Regen and Naab with the Danube had been chosen with the aim of controlling these invasion routes from Bohemia and Central Germany.

The well known building inscription of the legionary camp confirms its completion in AD 179 (Dietz and Fischer (1996) 84–99). If we look at the relative chronology of the coins and Terra Sigillata from both the fort at Regensburg-Kumpfmühl and the legionary camp at Regensburg, it becomes apparent that these follow each other without a large chronological hiatus. With this method it is possible to separate two archaeological find horizons differing both in relative and absolute chronology in the archaeological material from Regensburg with surprising clarity: The first is the ‘Kumpfmühl-horizon’ (after AD 172 and before AD 179) and the second the horizon of the legionary camp (from circa AD 179 onwards) (Fischer (1994) 343f.; Fischer (2009) 110f.). These clearly defined find horizons can be used as comparisons to verify other find contexts that cannot be linked to the Marcomannic wars with the same certainty. In this undertaking, the relief decorated Terra Sigillata is especially suitable for comparative chronological studies.

Mangolding-Mintraching, Herzogmühle

This *vicus* and military post lies at an important crossroads of the southern road along the Danube and a road coming from the valley of the Isar near Landshut. An extensive destruction layer from a conflagration was found here. The characteristic spectrum of finds from this layer is almost identical to the one at Regensburg-Kumpfmühl, especially in the relief-decorated Terra Sigillata (Fischer (1994) 345; Fischer (2009) 111).

Straubing

Before the Marcomannic wars, two contemporary auxiliary forts were located in Sorviodurum/Straubing, situated to the east of Regensburg. A Coh. I Canathenorum milliaria equitata occupied the larger fort and a smaller one to the west of it was occupied by a Coh. Raetorum. Both forts and a large *vicus* became the victim of a large fire in the second part of the second century AD, which can be linked to the Marcomannic wars with the help of the archaeological material from the destruction layers at Regensburg-Kumpfmühl (Fischer (1994) 341–54; Fischer (2009) 111).

Augsburg

The capital of Raetia, Augusta Vindelicorum/Augsburg was enclosed by a city wall after the mid-second century, following some destruction by fire. This has

been convincingly argued to have been a reaction to the Marcomannic wars. The erection of the wall seems to have been carried out with the help of the Legio II Italica, as a building camp of this unit has recently been found (Fischer (1994) 341–54; Fischer (2009) 112).

Gauting

In the *vicus* of Gauting on the Roman road from Kempten to Salzburg a destruction layer was excavated in which a depot of burnt Terra Sigillata was found. The spectrum of this depot is identical to the spectrum of the relief-decorated Terra Sigillatas from the layers at Regensburg-Kumpfmühl. The *vicus* of Gauting seems thus to be one of the few places in the interior of Raetia that can be assumed to have been destroyed during the Marcomannic wars (Fischer (1994) 341–54; Fischer (2009) 113).

Eining-Unterfeld

Many new finds have verified the dating of the camp of the Legio III Italica at Eining-Unterfeld into the Marcomannic wars. The vexillation camp build for half a legion plus mounted auxiliary troops, was only used for a short period. This period can be limited by two dates: AD 172 as the earliest possible destruction date for Regensburg-Kumpfmühl and AD 179, the date of the completion of the legionary camp at Regensburg (Fischer (1994) 348f.; Fischer (2009) 113).

3.4. Noricum

In 1995, M. Pollak collected the archaeological finds and contexts linked to the Marcomannic wars in Noricum (Pollak (1994) 431–37). She names coin hoards (Pollak (1994) 432) and destruction layers, some of which can be linked with more certainty to the Marcomannic wars than others. Interestingly, Linz is the only military base where well-dated destruction layers from a fire make it likely that the camp was destroyed during the conflicts. All the other evidence for similar attacks from enemies in Noricum comes from *vici* and *municipia*. The region to the north of the Danube opposite Noricum was separated from the regions of Germanic settlement in Bohemia by impenetrable wooded mountains. It therefore seems likely that the attackers came from more easterly regions of Germanic settlement in today's Lower Austria, Moravia, and Slovakia. The attackers probably skirted the border defenses on the Danube and thus could advance into the unprotected interior of the province to loot and pillage. The destructions in Flavia Solva suggest that the Barbarians did not use the passes of the Central Alps to get to Italy, but went via the Eastern Alps.

Salzburg/Juvavum

In Noricum's two other *municipia* to the north of the Alps, Salzburg/Juvavum and Wels/Ovilava, both securely dated destruction layers and less well dated complexes have come to light (Krammer (2007); Fischer (2009) 113).

Hallstatt

In the *vicus* of Hallstatt, which was linked to the Roman salt mining in the region, a conflagration layer from the second half of the second century AD was found. This suggests that this wealthy *vicus* had also fallen victim to the pillaging enemies (Pollak (1994) 432).

Wels/Ovilava

The burnt Terra Sigillata from the destruction layers in the *municipium* of Ovilava displays an almost identical spectrum to the horizon of Regensburg-Kumpfmühl, which dates the destruction at this place to the period of the Marcomannic wars (Fischer (2009) 113).

St. Pölten/Cetium

In St. Pölten, the conflagration layers can be dated with the help of coins to a terminus post quem of AD 170. In addition to that, an inscription on the reconstruction of the settlement in the years AD 169/72 prove the seriousness of these destructions (Scherrer (1994) 447–55).

Flavia Solva

Clear evidence of destruction can also be found in the *municipium* of Flavia Solva to the south of the Alps, marking the advance of the Barbarians to Northern Italy (Groh (1996)).

Lauriacum/Lorch

After the Marcomannic wars, the Legion II Italica was stationed in Noricum, which previously did not have a legion. Similar to the situation in Raetia, this is interpreted by scholars as an intensification of the border defenses in reaction to the Marcomannic wars. The location was chosen because of the crossing of the southern Danube road with an old road from the Alps into the Barbaricum to the north of the Danube. The legion was first camped in Albing, before moving to Lauriacum/Lorch (Pollak (1994) 433; Fischer (2009) 113).

3.5. *Pannonia*

In the main theater of war Pannonia, we can be fairly certain of large-scale destructions. But the state of research is such that no representative picture of the finds emerges. Some conflagration layers dated into the right bracket are an indication of the destruction (Gabler (1994) 355–69).

3.6. *Barbaricum*

The region to the north of the Danube on the border of Noricum and Pannonia – Lower Austria, Moravia, and Slovakia – were the ancestral lands of the Marcomanni, Quadi and the other tribes which participated in the Marcomannic wars. Here, a very dynamic archaeological research has managed to make good progress on the Marcomannic wars (Tejral (1992); Komoróczy (2009)).

Inner Germanic Migrations

The ancient sources allude to the pressure that must have been applied to the Marcomanni and other Germanic tribes living directly on the borders of the Roman Empire by their inner-German neighbors, which seems to have been one of the major causes of the war. Archaeological indicators of this pressure have been discovered recently (Godłowski (1994) 115–28; Böhme (1975) 212–15).

Inscription of Trenčín

A rock-cut inscription near the Slovakian city of Trenčín records an episode from the last winter of the war in AD 179/80: A vexillatio of 855 men of the Legio II Adiutrix from Budapest under their commander M. Valerius Maximianus spent the winter at a place by the name of Laugaricio, to close the Trenčín gap in the valley of the River Waag. The Romans thus occupied the key point for the control of the main road between the Germanic tribes of the Quadi and the Vandals (Böhme (1975) 210f.; Komoróczy (2009) 116, fig. 4).

The Roman Import to the Barbaricum during the Marcomannic Wars

The research of A. Stuppner has given us an indication of the disturbances the Marcomannic wars caused in the economic relations between the Roman Empire and the Barbaricum (Stuppner (1994) 285–98). During the second and third century AD, many finds imported from the Roman Empire – such as

fibulae, metal vessels, and pottery – have been found in the trans-Danubian region on the other side of the Limes. Among these finds, the relief-decorated Terra Sigillata is especially important as it gives us quite precise datings. Stuppner could demonstrate that relief-decorated Terra Sigillata and other pottery present in large numbers in the destruction layers from the Marcomannic war on the Roman side of the border is absent in the Barbaricum after the hostilities have begun – except on Roman military sites. Not only does he interpret this as an interruption of the trade between the Roman and the Germanic side, but he also regards this as evidence for the discontinuation of Germanic settlement in the border zone to the north of the Danube. Such a temporary prohibition of settlement can be linked to historic sources reporting that one of the conditions in the peace treaties of Rome with the Germanic tribes was an evacuation of the border zone to the north of the Danube.

The Circulation of Roman Currency in the Barbaricum during the Marcomannic Wars

A further effect of the Marcomannic wars was the large influx of Roman coins of the second century AD – most of them denarii – deep into the interior regions of the Barbaricum (Bursche (1994) 471–85). That this money could have included Roman tributary payments to the Germanic tribes as well as the ransom of prisoners is a plausible theory, which will probably never be verified. A detailed analysis by E. Kolníková charts the effect of the Marcomannic wars as mirrored in the coinage found in the Barbaricum (Kolníková (1994) 487–96). She can identify an increased influx of Roman coinage into the border zone of the Barbaricum during the wars, a phenomenon which stops in the period directly after the wars.

The Fort of Iza

The fort of Iza is about 3ha in size and situated on the northern banks of the Danube in today's Slovakia. It was built during the Marcomannic wars as a bridgehead of the camp of the Legio I Adjutrix in Brigetio/Komaron, in today's Hungary. In its first phase, the fort had a turf and timber wall of unknown construction with two V-shaped ditches and adobe interior buildings. According to recent coin finds from the destruction layers, it was destroyed and burned to the ground – most likely by a Germanic attack – in AD 179, shortly before the end of the war in AD 180. Many belongings, which would have been taken out of the fort by the troops under normal circumstances, were left behind in the chaotic destruction of the fort and discovered by the archaeologists in the destruction layers. Among them were fibulae, coins, and pottery, but also a large number of weapons: swords, the heads of lances

and spears, parts of lorica segmentata, scale armor and mail armor as well as parts of shields and helmets. Some iron trilobate arrowheads and bone laths of composite bows were also found. Iron shoe nails prove the presence of lost caligae, which suggests chaotic conditions during the abandonment of the fort. The finds also hint at the garrison of the fort, which must have consisted of infantry and eastern archers (Rajtár (2009)).

Roman Marching Camps

With the introduction of aerial archaeology in Austria, ditch systems interpreted as the remains of shortly occupied marching camps were discovered frequently to the north of the Danube. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain made aerial archaeology possible in the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe as well, such ditch systems of marching camps were also discovered in the region to the north of the Danube in Pannonia. At the moment around 30 such camps are known and it does not seem rash to expect more of these finds in the coming years. Many can be dated by their own finds and as these installations often either lie on top of Germanic settlements or under them, the finds from these settlements also help to date the camps into the period of the Marcomannic wars (Komorócy (2009) 114–19). The northernmost installation of this kind was found near Olomouc-Neredín (Olmütz) and could be dated securely into the period of the Marcomannic wars by the finds from overlaying or overlaid Germanic settlements. The camp controlled the Moravian Gate on an important road into the settlement region of the Germanic Przeworsk culture in today's Poland. Most of these installations conform to the usual plan of Roman camps in a rectangular or trapezoid form with rounded corners ('Spielkartenschema', playing-card plan). The construction of towers, gates, or interior buildings could not be identified. The dimensions were varying from smaller camps of circa 1–2ha, up to installations of 50ha that could house several legions. A common occurrence is the discovery of several installations at the same place, occasionally even overlapping each other.

3.7. Other Roman Military Bases in the Barbaricum

Some military installations in the trans-Danubian Barbaricum seem to have been occupied by the Roman army for a longer period during the Marcomannic wars. Among those are some fortified places with a supra-regional function as important command posts, which in some cases seem to have been required to defend that position in bitter fights. These installations do not conform to the usual regular plan of Roman camps mentioned above (playing card plan), but are fortifications irregular and varied in both form and size, which often use

older prehistoric hilltop settlement sites. While the size and date of the installation of Stillfried in Lower Austria remain somewhat vague, recent research has sharpened the picture of Musov in Moravia:

Stillfried

The prehistoric hilltop settlement of Stillfried in Lower Austria seems to have been occupied for a longer period by a Roman unit during the Marcomannic wars. Finds of Roman weapons suggest that this installation was fought over (Komoróczy (2009) 115).

Musov

The location Burgstall-Hradisko near Musov in Moravia is the best-researched example of a Roman military fortification in enemy country during the period of the Marcomannic wars. The irregularly oval fortification of 25ha was surrounded by a turf and timber wall and V-shaped ditches. In the interior, stone buildings were found: living quarters with a hypocaust and a bath building. Some of the tiles from these stone buildings were stamped by Leg. X Gemina Pia Fidelis, which was stationed in Vienna. This legion is also mentioned in a dotted inscription on an armor fitting. During recent years, more and more traces of wooden buildings have been excavated. Numerous Roman small finds, many of them weapons from conflagration layers, suggest fighting on the site. The finds that can be dated with accuracy – mainly coins and Terra Sigillata – come from the period of the Marcomannic wars. The coin finds have made it possible to date the erection of the buildings into the year AD 172. After a short period, the installation was abandoned for some time then re-occupied in the year 178 and finally abandoned AD 180. Among the interesting finds are some metal workplaces, which suggest the production, repair, and recycling of military equipment. Burgstall-Hradisko may well be the most important Roman military installation and the military headquarters of the Roman army operating in the Barbaricum during the Marcomannic wars (Tejral (1992) 380–408; Komoróczy (2009) 119–24). To what extent the Germanic royal tomb of Musov (robbed in antiquity) near the Burgstall-Hradisko site may be linked to the Marcomannic wars is difficult to say (Tejral (2009) 128–30).

3.8. Destroyed Germanic Settlements

Destruction layers in Germanic settlements from the second half of the second century AD cannot always be related to the events during the Marcomannic wars, due to a lack of precisely dateable finds. An exception is the settlement of

Bernhardstal in Lower Austria, which was violently destroyed and built over with a Roman marching camp (Tejral (1992) 409–23). On the other hand, the destruction or abandonment of quite a number of Germanic settlements may well have been linked to the Marcomannic wars, as the number of finds of Roman imported ware – especially pottery and Terra Sigillata – in the trans-Daubian region of Pannonia is remarkably high. While the local handmade pottery is unsuitable for fine chronological dating, one can often date the Roman imported pottery and some metal finds like fibulae and metal vessels to within at least a decade.

4. Summary

Current archaeological research allows us to state with a high degree of certainty that in Raetia, the destruction of the Marcomannic wars was more or less contained in a region from the eastern part of the Limes to Straubing. In the interior of the province, only Gauting and probably also Augsburg exhibit similar destruction. It is possible to deduce from the regional distribution of the destruction that the enemy came directly from the region of Bohemia through the Cham-Futh gap (Regen valley) and the Stallwangen gap into the valley of the Danube near Regensburg and Straubing and then went further into the eastern part of the Raetian limes and the interior of the province. To the east of Straubing, no destructions of the Marcomannic wars were found despite extensive excavations in the border forts of Künzing and Passau.

In Noricum, the traces of violent destruction from the period of the Marcomannic wars can mainly be found in the civil settlements on both sides of the Alps. The state of research on the border forts in that region is such that no definite statements can be made. This is also applicable for Pannonia, where similar destructions were also mainly found in civil settlements. But this may also indicate that the Roman border defense was skirted and the enemy penetrated directly into the interior of the provinces – at least in Noricum.

Apart from their historical significance, the destruction layers of the Marcomannic wars are of special importance for Provincial Roman archaeology as they provide finds suitable for fine chronological dating from a closely dated period, which otherwise does not have many dated sites. In recent years, the research in the trans-Danubian Barbaricum has been the most dynamic from all the regions affected by the Marcomannic wars: The archaeological research into the consequences of the Marcomannic wars has made remarkable progress in Lower Austria, the Czech Republic (Moravia) and Slovakia. With the help of aerial archaeology, new marching camps are constantly found and excavated. And the systematic research into the Germanic settlements and cemeteries

continues unabatedly. Finally, the excavations in Musov continuously provide new results on the command structure and logistics of the Roman army in enemy country during the wars. In addition to that, archaeological evidence points towards an abandonment of the Germanic settlements in the border zone to the north of the Danube as one result of the peace treaties after the end of the wars in AD 180.

NOTE

* The author thanks Stefanie Hoss for the translation.

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CHAPTER 3

The *Meditations*

*Matteo Ceperina**

1. The Dating of the *Meditations*

Very little can be said with certainty about the dating and the time span over which this collection of writings was compiled, for which Marcus Aurelius used the generic term *hypomnēmátia*, that is to say ‘notes’ or ‘notelets’ (*Meditations* 3.14.1). Since there is no definite data concerning the chronology of the *Meditations*, it is impossible to assert that it is the work of a whole lifetime.¹ Nevertheless, the fragmentary nature and heterogeneity of the various chapters, as well as the discontinuity of writing, now refined and artfully constructed, now plain or less controlled, would lead us to think of a rather wide time span, maybe several years. The references to the emperor’s advanced age are too frequent not to arouse the suspicion that at least part of the work dates back to his late maturity, after his accession to the throne (cf. especially 6.30.1): in 2.2.4 Marcus Aurelius explicitly calls himself ‘old’ (cf. also 2.6.2: ‘this life you have almost brought to an end . . .’, 5.31.3, 10.15.1). References to the time or to significant biographical events are scarce. Two chapters of the eighth book (8.25.1, 37.1) certainly come after the death of his adoptive brother Lucius Verus, who died in AD 169. The recollection of the plague (9.2.4–5) most probably refers to a time no earlier than the year 166 when, according to the sources, Verus’s legions, victorious on the Mesopotamian front, spread the contagious disease in the west. The reference to the Sarmatians, in *Meditations* 10.10.1, somewhat recalls the military operations conducted by Marcus Aurelius on the north-east front starting in 174, but is not necessarily connected to any event in particular, such as the conferment of the title of Sarmaticus in 175 or the celebration of the triumph in Rome the following year. A few other inferences are possible but without knowing to which part of

the text exactly correspond some termini post quos: the double portrait of Antoninus Pius (1.16, 6.30.5–15) definitely looks like a posthumous homage (in which case it would be after 161, although the reference is rather vague), whereas any other link is so uncertain as to deserve no mention. The two inside inscriptions should give more precise information about dating but in actual fact they are not conclusive. The first one, in Xylander's *editio princeps*, reads, at the end of the first book: 'Written in the territory of the Quadi, near the river Granua. I'. However, due to the fact that the first book – which, as it has been unanimously recognized, is a sort of introduction to the work – was written later than others, the above-mentioned *subscriptio* is preferably moved to the second book (which therefore becomes 'the first book written during the campaign against the Quadi'), of which it becomes the heading. The second one, instead, is found at the beginning of the third book: 'Written in Carnuntum'. But does it really only refer to the third book or also to one or more of the ones that follow? It is difficult to declare an opinion, since there is no guarantee that the current division in books reflects the original one. The river Granua (now Hron or Gran) is a tributary of the Danube. Carnuntum, not far from the river, is now called Petronell (near Bad-Deutsch-Altemburg), not far from Vienna and Bratislava, where important ruins can be found. Marcus Aurelius lived there from 170 to 173, during the campaigns against the Quadi and the Marcomanni (who invaded the Empire in 168). And that was probably where he composed the *Meditations* from the second book onwards. Nevertheless, the uncertain dating of the campaigns against the Barbarians leads to a significant fluctuation, between 172 and 178 approximately; however, it is likely that the books from the 4th to the 12th were written after 173. As far as the first book is concerned, which is so different in content and general tone, it may have been composed in Rome, between 176 and 180, on the way back from the east after Avidius Cassius's revolt, or in Sirmio (now Sremska Mitrovica), Marcus Aurelius's headquarters between 178 and 180, during his last German campaigns.

2. The History of the *Meditations* in the Early Centuries

The 12 books of the *Meditations* were neither conceived nor organized to be published, as is undoubtedly proved by their content, which lacks the necessary references for an outside reader and whose intelligibility and importance can be fully understood only by the author itself. In fact, most allusions, images, hints, and above all suggestions and warnings make sense only if addressed to oneself.² The fact that this text was conceived for personal use is also confirmed

by other clues. First of all the obscurity to which it was immediately doomed. During the centuries following the second century AD no author seemed to know this work, which should have aroused the attention and interest of learned people. The very few alleged signs of acquaintance with the *Meditations* during the late Roman Empire were gathered by Schenkl ((1913) XXXVIII–XXXIX), and discussed by Farquharson ((1944) XIII–XVI). The extensive and convincing examination by Hadot and Luna ((1998) XII–XIX), now enables us to fully assess its interest and importance as far as the history of the text is concerned. Dio Cassius, who wrote a few years after the death of the emperor, while reporting a speech that Marcus Aurelius was supposed to have made to the soldiers after Avidius Cassius's revolt (Dio 71.24.2, 26.2), attributed to him words and expressions that could somehow be confirmed by the content of some chapters (5.33.3, 9.42.10f.). Nevertheless, that Dio Cassius had read the work, as claimed by Farquharson, is far from being proved. The only exception seems to be found in the declaration, though quite reticent, made by the orator Themistius (fourth century), who in AD 364, while singing emperor Valens's praise, said: 'You do not at all need Marcus's exhortations (*paraggélmata*) . . .' (*Orationes* 6.81c). However, once again, it is difficult to say whether this is a precise reference to a written text, which was already fairly widespread, or a general reference to the philosophical virtues of his renowned predecessor, a well-known feature, cherished by the posthumous tradition, from Dio Cassius to Aurelius Victor. Some correspondences may be found between Marcus's work and Julian the Apostate's writings (circa 331–63), but it is easier to think that Julian was using motifs and stylistic elements characteristic of a well-established philosophical and rhetorical tradition, and the idea that he knew and intentionally quoted the emperor's *hypomnēmátia* tends to be excluded, even though the emperor provided a model for him to follow during all his life (cf. Julian, *Letter to Themistius* 253a; Ammianus Marcellinus 16.1.4). Finally, the statement made by the ecclesiastical historian Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos (circa 1295–1360), according to which Marcus Aurelius composed a book intended for the education of his son Commodus (*Historia ecclesiastica* 3.31), deserves no credit, and is one of the arbitrary inferences made by an author who tended to present ancient literature in a particularly carefree way. In the *Toxitanus* codex, which provided a model for the *editio princeps*, published in 1559, the work had no title. However, the heading, which can probably be ascribed to Xylander, reads: 'Book the first among the ones composed for himself (*eis heautón*) by emperor Marcus Antoninus.' In the *Vaticanus Graecus* 1950 codex the work has no title either: the heading which attributes the writing to the hand 'of emperor Marcus' (*Márkou autokrátoros*) can only be found at the beginning of the 12th book.³ Nevertheless, whoever published the text and then transmitted it, in circumstances which remain completely mysterious, seems to have had no doubts

concerning its private nature. Arethas of Caesarea (circa 850–935), bishop of the Eastern Orthodox Church and book collector, mentions the ‘writings on ethics intended for himself’ (*tà eis heautòn Ethiká*) of emperor Marcus Aurelius (scholia to Lucian, *Pro imaginibus* 3, p. 207, ll. 7–8, ed. Rabe): it seems likely that this title dates back to the ancient tradition and reflects, if not to the letter, at least the spirit of the author’s *inscriptio*.

As regards the role played by Arethas in the history of the manuscript tradition, he can impartially be given the merit of having rescued the *Meditations* from oblivion and vigorously drawn them to the attention of learned men. Whatever the reason for his great esteem of this work, he seems to have played a crucial role in healing, with loving care, the wounds opened up by time (Cortassa (1997) 139). Indirect confirmation of this hypothesis is provided by the extracts from the *Meditations* contained in the *Suida*, the Byzantine lexicon contemporary with Arethas: these quotations were certainly added by the authors during its compilation, since the other grammatical and learned writings slightly preceding the *Suida*, which constantly refer to the *auctoritas* of the past, are clearly unaware of the *Meditations*, that are never directly quoted (Schironi (2000) 213). Besides, it seems that the Patriarch Photius (circa 820–91) does not yet know Marcus Aurelius as the author of the *Meditations*. He is certainly the ‘philosopher among sovereigns’ but as a writer he is only an excellent author of epistles in Greek, so praiseworthy as to be provided as a model for those aiming at perfection in the epistolary style. However, after Arethas the acquaintance with the *Meditations* seems well established, precisely starting from the *Suida* and John Tzetzes (12th century) (Cortassa (1997) 126).

In a scholium, commenting on a passage by Dio Chrysostom (*or.* 32.5, p. 116, ed. Sonny), which says that men will not attain any good unless generated by the will and the power of the gods, because they are the guardians of all goods, Arethas remarks that this passage agrees with what emperor Marcus wisely (*sophôs*) stated: ‘Everything flows from above (*pánta ánōthen rhêi*)’ (*Meditations* 2.3.1). Arethas associates another passage from Dio Chrysostom (*or.* 20.8, p. 113, ed. Sonny), in which you are invited to reflect on the fact that the best refuge is that which you can enjoy inside yourself, wherever you are, with Marcus Aurelius’s reflection in which he states that nowhere else can man find a more peaceful and quiet refuge than in his soul (*Meditations* 4.3.2). Finally, in the *incipit* of a letter to emperor Leo VI the Philosopher (*Epistols* 71, vol. 2, p. 105, ed. Westerink), Arethas states that he much appreciates and follows the precept of the ‘wise Marcus’ (*Márkoi peithómenos tōi sophōi*) which says to always read carefully, as well as the other wise precept which follows: not to listen readily to prattlers (*Meditations* 1.7.7).

In a letter to Demetrius, metropolitan bishop of Eraclea, which is certainly prior to the year 907, when he was appointed archbishop of Caesarea, Arethas claims to have extracted an apograph of the *Meditations* from an old

manuscript, which had reached him in circumstances that remain unknown (*Epistols* 44, vol. 1, p. 305, ed. Westerink). This is the first clear mention, datable with reasonably safe approximation and of known authorship, of the work by Marcus Aurelius, and it is very likely that the important information contained in it will enable us to discover the origin of the manuscript tradition of the *Meditations* (Cortassa (1997) 112). However, nothing in the letter suggests that Arethas considered this book as a real rarity or that he had brought it to light again on his own: on the contrary, he writes of this work as if his correspondent was quite familiar with it (Farquharson (1944) XVII). As has successfully been demonstrated by Hadot and Luna ((1998) XIX–XXI), who politely question the overall interpretation given by Cortassa ((1997) 115–21), Aretha's copy was not in the least 'completely in pieces' (*pantápassi dierrhuékós*): the expression *ou mèn hóti* (not, however, because), which is essential in order to correctly understand the *incipit* of the letter in its exact meaning, cannot be equivalent to *ouch'hóti* (although) (Ronconi (2003) 21).⁴ It is therefore likely that Arethas had a perfectly legible copy, no matter how old, of the *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius and that he only had it transcribed in order to hand it down to posterity in a renewed state. Thus, it is no longer appropriate to attribute the work's supposed corruptions to the bad condition of its archetype: the successful restoration of *Meditations* 7.24, one of the passages which has been by far the most abused by philologists and editors,⁵ and the provocative remarks made by Giangrande (2003), eloquently bear witness to a tradition that is often unjustly suspected.

Further indications may be provided by another text, the anonymous epigram contained in the *Greek Anthology* (AP 15.23). These verses, which undoubtedly refer to a copy of the *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius, appear again as *colophon* in the *Vaticanus Graecus* 1950 codex. It is very likely that Marcus's reader, who introduced the poem to the *Anthology*, was Arethas (Maas (1913) 297). If credit is given to the hypothesis formulated by Hadot and Luna ((1998) XXII–XXIV), who ascribe the epigram to the historian and epigrammist Theophylact Simocatta (late sixth to early seventh century), the first piece of evidence of the existence of the *golden booklet* by Marcus Aurelius would be advanced by about three centuries.

3. The Indirect Tradition

3.1. *The Text of the Meditations as Preserved by Suida*

After Arethas of Caesarea, the most ancient indirect piece of evidence of Marcus Aurelius's work is the Byzantine lexicon called *Suida*, which dates back to the 10th century. It is difficult to ascertain whether its author had directly read and

quoted Marcus Aurelius's text or whether he had reproduced some extracts gathered by a compiler. Both the distribution of the quotations (15 from the first book, four from the second, two from the third, one from the fourth, two from the fifth, four from the ninth and one from the 11th) and the abundance of miscellaneous codices which have survived in the manuscript tradition, in which only some selected passages were collected, would lead one to think that it is rather a work of *excerpta*, an anthology of the *Meditations*. Whatever the case, the *Suida* was fully aware of the existence of the book written by the philosopher-emperor, since the biographical entry on Marcus Antoninus reads: 'He wrote a guide for his own life in 12 books.' In five quotations it specifically says that Marcus Aurelius is the author of this work, in the following words: 'in Marcus Antoninus'; 'says Marcus, the philosopher-emperor'; 'from the work by Marcus Antoninus'; 'even Marcus Antoninus says', or, more simply, 'Marcus'. The other 21 quotations are anonymous. Generally, but not always, these quotations are inserted in order to explain rare words, usually very peculiar ones. Some are long and literal – you can therefore find all, or at least most of the wording from some chapters, for example 2.12.3, 2.13.1–4, 2.14.1–4, 3.5.2–4; whereas others are freer, but the differences are minimal.

These characteristics, which imply the original reworking of the text, are mainly found in the passages taken from the first book, which has distinctive features compared to the other 11 books and provides a sort of preamble to the whole work; in fact, in this book, Marcus lists the benefits and the teachings he received from various people during his life. The book is characterized by an extremely concise syntax and by the substantivization of all elements of grammar, obtained by adding the neuter article *tó* in front of the word or syntagm to be substantivized, in order to make the speech as abstract as possible. The *Suida* eliminated these substantivizations, avoiding *tó* (Schironi (2000) 214). Thus, Marcus Aurelius's list of the things he had learnt from Apollonius (I. 8. 3) becomes the portrait of the ideal conduct of the sage: 'The sage must always be like himself, in acute pain, during the loss of a child, during chronic diseases.' Similarly, what Marcus Aurelius says about Sextus (1.9.1–10) is turned into the description of what *should* be done, that is to say in order to live like a sage. The same change can be found when speaking of Antoninus Pius (1.16.10 and 20) (Hadot and Luna (1998) CLXXXVI). However, it is clear that the author of the *Suida* was aware of the peculiar features of the first book, since he quotes the passage concerning Diogenetus using the words: 'From Diogenetus I learnt', which express the meaning of the stereotyped formula used by Marcus Aurelius at the beginning of each chapter, i.e. *pará* (followed by the proper noun of the person to whom the chapter is dedicated) + *tó* (with the content of the teaching).

Both quotation procedures, which undoubtedly refer to the formulas typically used in anthologies, can be found exactly alike in the collection of

extracts contained in the *Darmstadtinus* 2773 codex (=D).⁶ Nevertheless, the hypothesis according to which the *Suida* drew on a work of *excerpta* from Marcus Aurelius that was preserved, with some alterations and loss of material, at least until the 14th century, when it was copied in the D miscellaneous codex, is treacherous to say the least (Schironi (2000) 225). However, it could be legitimately assumed that the *Suida* was only acquainted with the *Meditations* in an anthological form (Hadot and Luna (1998) CLXXXVII). This mainly because the tendency for D to simplify sentences by adding elements that aim at making their meaning explicit, which sometimes take the form of real clarifying paraphrases, is significantly common to all the manuscripts of group C. Furthermore, the occasional Christianization inferred in the work by Marcus Aurelius, for which both the author of the *Suida* and the compiler of D replace the plural *theói* (the gods) with the singular *theós* (God) (however, never in the same passages), does not prove anything in itself: it is one of the most frequent mistakes made in medieval manuscripts, which can be found exactly alike, for example, in the version of 6.35.2 that can be read in the *excerpta* of group W. Final confirmation is given by another extremely important piece of indirect evidence: the frequent Christianization seems to be one of the distinctive characteristics of the paraphrases of Marcus Aurelius contained in the writings by Joseph Bryennius (Rees (2000) 586 and 596). The preference given to the first book of the *Meditations* by the copyist of the D codex is common to the *Suida*, which, like D, also focuses its attention on the first three books in general. However, this is not an exclusive feature: the same situation is found in the extracts from Marcus Aurelius in the manuscripts of group C. This is precisely why Paul Maas, in his suggested stemma, was inclined to associate C with the manuscript tradition that goes back to the *Suida* (Maas (1945) 145). If you compare the text of the *Meditations* quoted by the *Suida* and the one contained in D, you will notice that they mostly correspond, except in three passages: the beginning (1.5–6, omitted in D), a central chapter (5.8, omitted in D), and the final part (11.18, omitted in D) (Schironi (2000) 220). On the one hand, the evident mutilation undergone by D, which probably deprived us of the extracts from the last three books, does not give evidence against the original presence of 11.18 in D, but on the other it certainly does not give a positive contribution to support this. The hypothesis that the copyist of D had a mutilated copy of the text from which the *Suida* had also taken its extracts is certainly legitimate, but cannot be taken into serious consideration. What if the person who copied the extracts from Marcus Aurelius in the Darmstadt codex had *deliberately* decided to cut out the first part of the text? In actual fact, it appears that the compiler of D deliberately omitted all the parts of the text containing too intimate an autobiographical subject, which could not be referred to more general ethical precepts. This would explain the omissions of chapters 1.1–6, in which Marcus Aurelius mentions some of his closest

relatives and the teachers who marked his childhood apprenticeship. The same can be said about chapter 1.17, in which the emperor expresses his heartfelt thanks to the gods for all the benefits received during his lifetime. Something similar must have happened during the substantial reworking which 4.3.2 underwent. Furthermore, if you have a look at the chart published in Dalfen ((1979) XXI–XXII), you will immediately notice the peculiar alternation of the *excerpta* contained in D and those contained in the manuscripts of groups W and X. In actual fact, there are very few chapters that can be read both in D and in WX, whereas there are many in common with C. Furthermore, the copyist of D gives preference to the first three books, and even though he did copy a certain amount of extracts from the first part of the fourth book, this later happened less and less. It seems therefore not inappropriate to assume that whoever assembled the collection of extracts contained in D was acquainted with a copy belonging to the group of manuscripts W or X, and chose Marcus Aurelius's text with the precise aim of integrating the anthology of the *Meditations* contained in it. Having said that, it is needless to say that, except for the *Suida*, chapters 5.8 and 11.18, omitted in D, can only be read in WX. The *Suida* is an extremely important witness to the *Meditations*, since it offers a generally correct text, if not, in at least three cases, even better than the manuscript tradition. Whereas nothing can be said about 1.6.3, since this paragraph is not contained in D, as far as 1.7.4 and 1.16.20 are concerned, D conforms to the manuscript tradition instead of quoting the correct variants transmitted by the *Suida*. If the *Suida* extracts and the anthology contained in D had really been taken from the same common model, this circumstance could not but appear bizarre.

Hadot also rightly accepts from the *Suida dià toioutou trópon* in 1.12, and this undoubtedly confirms T's variant. On the contrary, the integration and complete rewriting of 1.16.20 would require extreme caution. However, the *Suida* extract corresponding to 1.6.2 in modern editions, as well as 1.9.6, very close to A's tradition, should have aroused much more interest.

Prudently leaving to one side 2.14.3, in which the *Suida* shows a singular discrepancy between the reading of the lemma *akéraion*, which can be read in AD, and that of the gloss *akariaîon*, which can be read in TC, none of the variants mentioned by Schironi ((2000) 218), except for 2.14.4 and, with some reservations, 2.13.1, enable us to ascertain the relationship between the text of the *Suida* and D's tradition only: the coincidence in 1.7.7, for instance, is totally accidental since the epitomist, after deliberately omitting to copy, immediately before, a whole sentence, no longer needs a coordinating conjunction, but a single negative. On the contrary, the correspondence between the *Suida* and T in 2.12.3, with *emphantazómena* versus *emphanizómena* in AD, although it is the correct reading, is particularly important because it is preceded by a typical separative error, *ídēi* AD: *eidēi Suida* and T. Finally, as far

as 9.22.2 is concerned, no one can deny that in this point the *Suida* is undoubtedly close to T.

3.2. *Joseph Bryennius and Johannes Reuchlin as Further Evidence for the Meditations*

Between the 14th and the 15th centuries, Joseph Bryennius (circa 1350–1431), a monk, preacher and theologian rather hostile to the union of the Western Church, abundantly quotes Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*, but always anonymously. A study on these quotations was outlined by Meyer ((1896) 99–100 and 110): the extensive essay by D.A. Rees (2000) now enables us to fully appreciate its testimonial value for the text's constitution. There is no reason at all to doubt that J.B. was reading the complete text of the *Meditations* (Rees (2000) 586): the possibility that he had drawn on an independent tradition, though, is most remote. The fact that in V. 19 J.B. differs from the two main witnesses A and T, thereby anticipating Schultz's conjecture centuries in advance, obviously does not prove anything. The same can be said about 7.56.2, where J.B.'s text transmits the reading which was then independently suggested by Coraïs. In actual fact, both cases can be explained as simple corrections made by J.B. However, none of the readings reported by Rees ((2000) 586–87), enables us to associate with certainty J.B.'s text with one or the other manuscript mentioned each time. The variant *entéuxomai*, which can be found in 2.2.1, rather than indicating a clear relationship with C, should be considered as the simplification of the correct form *suntéuxomai*, probably due to the fact that he was quoting from memory. Even 2.1.5 is useless: the confusion between the verbs *apotrèpesthai* and *apotrèphesthai*, a mistake peculiar to J.B. and the manuscripts of group C in this passage, recurs in 11.9.1, but this time it is common to v₈, a manuscript of group W, and to all codices of group X. They are ordinary slips, too common to appear really significant. The same applies to the mistakes in 8.48.3 and 9.42.8, which are common to J.B. and the manuscripts of groups W and X: often the text is not consistent even within manuscripts belonging to the same group. The addition of *oûn* in 10.34.6, which can also be found in WX, is ascribable to J.B.'s paraphrase, and the same applies, shortly after, to the evident replacement of *édē*, which can be found only in the two main witnesses A and T, with *met'oligon*. Since it is not a matter of mistakes but of correct readings, the correspondence between J.B. and T versus A in 4.29.2 and 8.52.2 does not give evidence of their close relationship, all the more so because in the latter case A's itacism is clearly evident. On the contrary, the hypothesis of an affiliation to A seems more promising. In 11.18.9 the variant *pathêin*, refused by all editors but certainly correct,⁷ belongs exclusively to A's tradition. Further clues can be found in 8.51.2: the form *blýzousa*, that can be read in J.B., recalls AD's

anablýzousa more closely than it does T's *anablýousa*. However, conclusive evidence is provided by *Meditations* 9.4, quoted by J.B. with the omission of *kakôî*, a lacuna typical of AD. Contrary to Rees's point of view, the fact that J.B.'s text preserves all the words later expunged by Dalfen does not in any way go against his theory of interpolations:⁸ as it is otherwise demonstrated by the possible relationship with A, it is sufficient to assume that J.B.'s copy dates back to a later time than hyparchetype β , where all the interpolations are supposed to have penetrated.

In the West there are a few sporadic quotations from Marcus Aurelius in the *De arte cabalistica* by Johannes Reuchlin, dating back to 1517, who might have had a personal copy of the text.⁹

4. The Manuscript Sources

The manuscript tradition of the *Meditations* has been carefully studied by a long series of scholars,¹⁰ and especially by J. Dalfen in his Teubner edition (see in particular his *stemma* on p. XXIV). In the following survey I shall therefore omit many points which have since then become well-known facts.

In brief, the sources for the text are as follows:

1. The *editio princeps*, edited by Xylander and published in Zurich by Andreas Gesner *filius* in 1559. The manuscript on which this was based (Dalfen's T, Farquharson's P cod.) came, we are told, from the Palatine Library of Heidelberg through the mediation of Michael Toxites (Schütz); the manuscript apparently disappeared, and was not even available to Xylander when his second edition was published (Basel (1568)).
2. A (*Vaticanus Gr.* 1950, s. 14), the only complete manuscript still extant.
3. D (*Darmstadtinus* 2773, s. 14), containing extracts from Books 1–9. It is very similar to A (Maas (1945) 145).
4. M (*Monacensis Gr.* 323, s. 16), containing short excerpts from Books 2–4, and also 7.50.
5. The C extracts. These, taken from the first four books, are found among various items of additional subject matter in seven manuscripts of the *Eclogae* of Stobaeus.
6. The W extracts. This series of extracts, closely related to X, is found in *Monacensis Gr.* 529 (Dalfen's B, Farquharson's Mo2), in V (*Vaticanus Gr.* 1823, 14th century) and v₈ (*Vaticanus Gr.* 2231, 14th century).
7. The X extracts. These are taken from Books 4–12, and are found in 25 manuscripts hitherto known to editors.
8. The '*Folium Treverense*' of 5.6.6–12.3, which bears a close similarity to T (Bergson (1986) 159–62), must be added to these sources.

5. Editions

5.1. *The Editio Princeps and the Basel Reprint*

The modern success of the *Meditations* is due to the publication of the first printed edition (=T) by Andreas Gesner *filius* in Zurich in 1559. The book, entrusted to the philologist and librarian from Heidelberg Wilhelm Xylander (Wilhelm Holtzmann), was accompanied by the *Proclus vel De Felicitate* by Marinus, another *editio princeps*. The editor's preface to *The Life of Proclus* clearly reports that both the *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius and the work by Marinus were contained in the same manuscript. This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that both Marinus and Marcus Aurelius could be found in another codex as well, which is no longer available (Rees (1971) 186). Both works were translated into Latin: the first one by Xylander himself, who added, in addition to some brief notes, Marcus Aurelius's evidence taken from the *Suida* lexicon and from Aurelius Victor. The history of the codex on which the *editio princeps* is based is partly unknown. We only know from a dedicatory letter, written in Greek and prefixed to the text by the naturalist and humanist Conrad Gesner, under whose auspices the book was published, that he received it 'from the excellent Michael Toxites, eminent poet (from the library of the most illustrious Otto Henry, Elector Palatine)', that is to say from the famous collection of Heidelberg (hence the abbreviation P used by some editors). Most probably Gesner came into possession of the manuscript in April 1556, when Michael Toxites (Michael Schütz), who was about to leave for Italy, was in Zurich, or after his return. However, it appears that Xylander never saw the codex in its entirety, since in the dedicatory epistle to the reprint in Basel in 1568 he was obliged to submit the delicate question of its origin exclusively to Gesner's authority (Bergson (1986) 163). It is therefore possible that either the book was later broken up and that Gesner gave Xylander only the pages containing Marcus Aurelius's work (Farquharson (1944) XXIII), or, alternatively, that Toxites's text, which Gesner later left at Xylander's disposal, was simply an apograph, thereby adding an extra step to the manuscript tradition (Bergson (1986) 163). At the beginning of October of 1558 the translation, preface, and notes, together with the original Greek text, were sent to Gesner from Heidelberg, where Xylander had moved from Basel not long before, to Zurich, and Gesner took charge of the complete printing, carried out by his cousin Andreas. In 1568, when the *codex Toxitanus* was no longer available, Xylander published a second edition in Basel, in which, as he explicitly stated, he intended to rectify the misprints of which the first edition was full. The fact that in 1568 Xylander was no longer in possession of the source of the *editio princeps*, although he had been librarian at the Palatine Library since 1561, led Schenkl ((1913) IX) to suppose that only *The Life of Proclus* had been sent to

Gesner from Heidelberg. The latter would be identical to the *Pal. Gr. 404* codex (f.73–101), which can now be found in the Vatican. On the contrary, Toxites would have taken hold of Marcus Aurelius's text in an indefinite place. However, the identity with the *Pal. Gr. 404* was proved to be false, and the hypothesis that Marcus Aurelius's manuscript didn't come from the library of Heidelberg is therefore unfounded. In the *editio princeps* the text of *The Life of Proclus* ends at the beginning of current chapter 22, whereas the *Pal. Gr. 404* contains the entire work and, what is more, was written in Madrid by Andreas Darmarius in 1579 (Farquharson (1944) XXVII).

5.2. The Textual Criticism and the Following Editions

For several decades the text established by Xylander was repeated in its various editions, among which it is worth mentioning in particular the one published in Lyon in 1626, since that was the text on which Saumaise worked. A crucial step towards a more correct text was made with the edition by Meric Casaubon (1643), published in London, who also used the *excerpta* of the *Monacensis Gr. 529* codex (=B), and above all with the edition by Thomas Gataker (1652), published in Canterbury, valuable for its vast fund of learning and for some successful critical contributions. Due to its value, Gataker's text was the basis for several editions during the 18th century, sometimes accompanied by significant critical notes: the reprinting in Leipzig (1775), published with the corrections made by S.F.N. Morus, became a sort of 'authorized version' until the end of the 19th century. The Frenchman J.P. de Joly was the first to use the *Vaticanus Gr. 1950* text (=A), the only complete manuscript of the work which has been preserved. Joly's work (1774) inaugurates a series of modern editions, which mainly differ in the different reliance placed by editors on one or the other of the two intact witnesses, and in the greater or lesser tendency to change the transmitted text, whereas the contribution made by other partial witnesses (codices containing *excerpta*) remains negligible. It is worth mentioning J.M. Schultz's editions, published in Schleswig in 1802 and reprinted in Leipzig in 1821; A. Coraïs (1816), published in Paris; C. Löffel (1861), published in New York under the pseudonym C.L. Porcher; J. Stich, published in Leipzig in 1882 and reprinted in the same town in 1903. The most important editions of the 20th century are those edited by J.H. Leopold (1908) for the series *Oxford Classical Texts*; H. Schenkl (1913), published in Leipzig for the well-known *Bibliotheca Teubneriana*; C.R. Haines (1916), published in London for the series *Loeb Classical Library*; A.I. Trannoy (1925), published in Paris for the *Collection des Universités de France* and now replaced, but only as far as the first book is concerned, by the excellent edition by P. Hadot (1998). Separate mention is deserved by the momentous work by A.S.L. Farquharson (1944) who provides, as well as a text supported by rather balanced choices and

solutions, an extensive description of Marcus Aurelius's philosophical personality and a rich commentary on the different aspects of the work. Very concise information comes from the notes in Willy Theiler's edition (1951), published in Zurich; Theiler's work has now been replaced by R. Nickel's edition (1990), which follows Trannoy's text, with few changes. J. Dalfen's edition, published in Leipzig in 1979 and reprinted in the same town in 1987, is the result of an accurate examination of the whole manuscript tradition, in which the relations among witnesses are reconstructed on an entirely new basis. His contribution proved to be particularly significant in defining the precise relations among the different manuscripts containing *excerpta*, in which he identified a new group, referred to as W. His work is particularly valuable for the extensive documentation provided in the apparatus, an irreplaceable tool for the interpreter of the *Meditations* who, dealing with a text which has been greatly damaged by tradition and which, from the 16th century up to now, has undergone constant restoration, is often bound to make arduous and crucial decisions among the various contributions. The complex preface also offers a detailed account of the relations among A, D, and T, even though the proposed reconstruction is not always convincing. Despite its many positive contributions, Dalfen's edition raises doubts about the constitution of the text. In a hypercritical attitude towards the manuscript tradition, which too often leads him to see a massive presence of glosses and marginal notes, and to insert emendations, sometimes even radical, Dalfen carries out a lot of expunctions. To be honest, these expunctions often appear to be arbitrary, because they are carried out even in points which, if compared with other passages, reflect some of the stylistic features peculiar to the *Meditations*.

6. Translations

Among the authors of the various Latin translations, which often accompanied Marcus Aurelius's work in the editions between the 16th and the 18th centuries, it is sufficient to mention Xylander and Gataker, whose versions have been repeatedly revived and modified. The text's translations in the various modern languages, due to the increasing number of readers interested in Marcus Aurelius, are innumerable and keep proliferating. Among the French translations it is worth mentioning those by A. Couat and P. Fournier (Bordeaux/Paris 1904), A.-P. Lemerrier (Paris 1910), L.L. Grateloup (Paris 1998), as well as those by Trannoy, in the edition mentioned, and by Hadot (first book). All the English translations prior to his have been accurately described and reviewed in detail by Haines ((1916) XVI–XX): his translation, along with Farquharson's (1944), are still unequalled. The latter has recently been updated by R.B. Rutherford and revived in a book which also includes the

translation of selected correspondence between Marcus Aurelius and Marcus Cornelius Fronto (Oxford 1990). Among the German translations which are worth mentioning are the above-mentioned ones edited by Theiler and Nickel, as well as those edited by C.F. Schneider (Essen 1996) and O. Kiefer (Frankfurt am Main 1992). The clear translation by G. Cortassa (Turin 1984), based on Farquharson's text – even though it successfully differs from it in some passages – is an excellent work, accompanied by appropriate notes. Among the most recent Italian translations it is worth mentioning the one by E.V. Maltese (Milan 1994), which also contains the Greek parallel text established by Dalfen, though significantly improved, and the one by A. Marchiori (Rome 2005), who offers interesting adjustments to Dalfen's text.

NOTES

- * I would like to thank my tutor, Prof. Davide Susanetti, and Prof. E. V. Maltese from the University of Turin for discussing with me many points of great importance. I also thank Deborah Boscarini for expressing my thoughts in the best possible way in a language that is not mine.
- 1. A general outline of the chronology of the *Meditations* is sketched by Haines (1914). Further clarification is given by Brunt ((1974) 18–19). The matter is now being dealt with in detail once again by Hadot and Luna ((1998) XLVI–LIII).
- 2. This appears to be unquestionable now, especially after the convincing arguments produced by Brunt ((1974) 1–5) (a fundamental contribution towards the overall interpretation of the *Meditations*).
- 3. Dalfen ((1978) 6, n. 2), is certainly not wrong when he states that the best documented title of the *Meditations* can be found in the codices belonging to group X: 'writings concerning himself' or 'private writings' (*tà kath'heautôn*).
- 4. The essential part of the letter will have to be interpreted as follows: 'Although I had long owned an old copy of the most useful book of emperor Marcus, however, since I happened to make a copy of it and to hand it down, renewed, to posterity (not, however, because it was completely in pieces and prevented whoever wished to do so from benefiting from its usefulness) . . . I deemed it right to make your venerable holiness the heir to my previous possession.'
- 5. See Giavatto (2005).
- 6. The data concerning the manuscript tradition of the *Meditations* are reported following the concise chart provided by Dalfen ((1979) XLI–XLII).
- 7. It is the principle of the *lectio difficilior*. In later Stoic philosophy *páschō* is 'to be acted upon by outward objects, take impressions from them'; mostly followed by *hóti*, 'to be led to suppose that' (cf. *Meditations* 10.33.2); also with the accusative 'have experience of' (LSJ⁹s.v. 4): the alternative *mathêin* ('to learn'), that can be found in T, is obviously a simplification.

8. Rees (2000) 586. See, in addition to Dalfen's edition, Dalfen (1974) and (1978). On these, however, see Sandbach (1981).
9. See, in addition to Hadot and Luna (1998) CLXXXVIII–CXCI; Bergson (1986) 165–69; Rees (1971) 188–92.
10. The essential points of the history of the text, and the evaluation of the manuscript tradition, remain those outlined by Schenkl ((1913) III–XXVII). Further clarification is given by Farquharson ((1944) XXII–XLII) and Rees (1971).

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CHAPTER 4

Marcus Aurelius' Letters

Pascale Fleury

1. Marcus Aurelius and the Epistolary Genre

The letters of Marcus Aurelius can be found, for the most part, in his correspondence with his teacher of Latin rhetoric Fronto. We know from Cassius Dio (LXXI, 36, 2–3) and the *Historia Augusta* (*Life of Marcus Aurelius* XXII, 6; XXIII, 7; XIX, 5; *Life of Avidius Cassius* IX, 5; XI, 2) that the epistolary activity of Marcus Aurelius did not confine itself to this corpus: the princeps himself makes reference to this in his *Meditations* when he mentions that Rusticus, his friend and guide in philosophy, taught him how to write simple letters (I, 7). The tradition also alludes to Greek letters: a correspondence with Herodes Atticus (Philostratus, *Life of the Sophists* 70, 1) and one with Aelius Aristides (*Oration* XLII, 14) are indicated. The allusions of Philostratus (*On the Correct Style for Writing Letters* II, 257 Kayser) and Photios (*Epistulae* 207 Westerink) suggest that certain letters, maybe in Greek, from the emperor were known and read in antiquity: they seem to have been used as a model for epistolary writing (Cortassa (1994)) and Philostratus says that Marcus Aurelius was the best of imperial correspondents. Other series of imperial letters were also circulating under the name of Marcus Aurelius in antiquity, but their authorship is dubious; included in these, are a letter to the koinon of Asia cited by Eusebius of Caesarea (IV, 13; cf. Cortassa (1994)). Additionally, a number of imperial rescripts, transmitted by jurists and historians also exist (cf. Eck's article in this volume).

2. Brief History of the Text

Among the texts mentioned above, however, only the correspondence with Fronto contains a complete series of authentic letters. With the exception of the incomplete manuscript of Paris that does contain letters of Lucius Verus to Fronto but none of Marcus Aurelius' (Bischoff (1958)), the correspondence was transmitted in a single manuscript, which is today preserved in two parts in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (E 147 sup.) and in the Vatican Library (*Vaticanus latinus* 5750). Originally the codex might have had approximately 680 pages: of this only 282 pages remain in the Ambrosianus codex and 106 in the Vatican manuscript. The codex has an almost square form; the text presents itself in two parallel columns; each column has 24 lines. The principal text of the manuscript is written in uncials of the fifth century. Three distinct hands can be discerned in the manuscript; the foremost of these made some corrections and emendations; the lesser two consist of a large number of semi-uncial annotations from the beginning of the sixth century, which mention different readings and so made use of at least another manuscript (m^2), and one (m^3) in cursive from the end of the seventh century whose efforts were confined solely to making minor corrections to the text. The dating of this last hand seems to show that the reuse of the manuscript to transcribe the *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon* (451) happened a little after the seventh century. It is very likely that the codex arrived already mangled at the library of Bobbio, around 1600, where it was divided into two parts. This resulted in the loss of the central folios and the housing of the two, now separated, parts in two different libraries. The manuscript arrived in 1606 at the Ambrosiana and in 1618 at the Vatican Library. Before the rediscovery of the manuscript by A. Mai at the beginning of the 19th century, no reliable testimonials about the letters of Marcus Aurelius existed (cf. Soupé (1873) 81): those mentioned by Louis-Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont (*Histoire des empereurs*, vol. II (1720)), Isaac Casaubon (in his edition of *HA* (1620)) and Pierre Bayle (*Dictionnaire historique et critique*, vol. II) were probably forgeries. Therefore, nothing indicates that we had a complete copy of Fronto and Marcus Aurelius' letters between the 7th and the 19th century (on these questions, see the introduction of the edition of van den Hout (1988)).

3. Hypothesis on the First Diffusion of the Correspondence

Although at first sight it may appear that certain letters, namely Fronto's treatise in epistolary form (*De eloquentia*, *De orationibus*), were intended for a

larger audience than the emperor's ear alone, the extremely narrow distribution of these letters in antiquity suggests that the publication owed neither to Fronto nor to Marcus Aurelius themselves and may have only occurred after the deaths of the two correspondents (*contra* Pflaum (1964)). Cova ((2004) 501) put forth the seductive theory that the spreading of these letters was initiated by a descendant of Fronto and aimed to re-establish the name of the family after the forced suicide of Victorinus, Fronto's son-in-law, and the coming of a new ruling family. This supposition is given credence by an inscription dating from the end of the second century (*CIL* XI 6334), in which Fronto's great-grandson highlights the *cursus* of his great grandfather and grandfather. In this case, the spreading of the letters would date from the beginning of the third century, which in turn would explain the presence in that century of a single direct quotation of the correspondence (Solinus, *Collectanea mirabilium*, Praef. 5 Mommsen²). It is not, moreover, until the fourth century that direct and explicit quotations of the correspondence appear (it is certainly mentioned in Charisius 161, 13; 256, 8; 267, 6; 287, 26; 288, 19 Barwick; and maybe by Artemidorus IV, 22). The fact that the direct citations do not quote Marcus Aurelius' letters, they all refer to the writings of Fronto, lends further weight to Cova's argument.

4. Miscellaneous Editions and Translations of the Correspondence

A. Mai rediscovered the Milan manuscript and published it in 1815; this publication was quickly followed by a new edition by Niebuhr (1816). Not long afterward, in 1819, A. Mai discovered the second half of the original manuscript at the Vatican Library and published an edition that rejoined the separated sections in 1823. The publishing work of Mai, though, quick and not particularly thorough, combined with problems related to the reading of the palimpsest, gave way to sustained German commentaries that led to a third edition from Mai (1846) and to the publication by Naber, based on readings by Du Rieu, of a more scientific new edition in 1867. To complicate matters further, and in accordance with preservation methods contemporaneous to the 19th century, A. Mai coated the manuscripts with chemical reagents, which damaged them permanently. Therefore, the 20th century editions are almost exclusively based on readings done in the first 50 years following their initial discovery and on the continual work of Naber and later of Erhenthal (1881) to establish a readable text. These philological works, published or not, gave birth to the first scientific edition of the text by M. van den Hout (1954), followed some 30 years later by an improved edition (1988) and, more

recently, a line-by-line explicative commentary of the editor's choices and of *realia* found in the correspondence (1999). As for the letters of Marcus Aurelius themselves, they benefited from separate translations and commentaries, notably by L. Pepe (1957) and G. Cortassa (1984). Translations without an edition but with punctual discussions of the text were also made; in French by A. Cassan (1830), based on the second edition of A. Mai; in English by C. Haines (1919–1920), consisting of a complete translation of the correspondence based on the text of Naber in a chronological order; in Italian by F. Portalupi (1974), that is also a complete translation of the correspondence based on the text of van den Hout¹; and in Spanish by A. Palacios Martin (1992), which is a complete translation of the correspondence based on the text of van den Hout². Partial translations of Marcus Aurelius' letters also sometimes follow publications of the *Meditations* (Pierron (1843); Rutherford (1989)), or can alternatively appear as an independent set of selected letters (MacQuige (1824); Richlin (2006)).

5. Marcus Aurelius' Letters: Vocabulary and the Epistolary Genre

The letters of Marcus Aurelius in the frontonian corpus amount to 88 letters and extend in time from 139 to the death of Fronto, probably in 166 or 167. They are almost entirely contained in the books of the *Ad Marcum Caesarem et inuicem* (72), to which the letter *Additamentum Epistularum* 7, dating from 139, could also be added. The other letters that exist probably date from the time that Marcus Aurelius was emperor (11 in the books *Ad Antoninum imperatorem* and the letters *De feriis Alsiensibus* 1 and 4 (161); *De nepote amisso* 1 and 3 (165–66)). The conservation status of all of these varies from complete to only a few words from the *incipit* or the opening address.

The vocabulary and style of Marcus Aurelius' letters are more familiar than Fronto's: the princeps seems to work towards intimacy through the reproduction of spoken language, a technique prescribed by various ancient epistolary theorists (Demetrius 234; Julius Victor 105, 10 Giomini). Among the many familiar expressions that he uses to make the written exchanges seems like a real dialogue (e.g. *Ad Marcum* I, 2, 1), are the ellipsis of verbs other than *esse* (*Ad Marcum* I, 2, 1; I, 6, 1; IV, 5, 2), and the rhetorical question constructed with the second person singular. The review of Marcus Aurelius' particular forms by van den Hout ((1999) 4–5, 26, 168–69) seems to indicate that Marcus Aurelius was inspired by the colloquialisms of Latin comedy. Notable are his allusions to Plautus, who is also an author mentioned in the frontonian canon (*Ad Marcum* IV, 3, 2; cf. Selvatico (1981) 248–54). This same concern

with building an epistolary intimacy seems to have led to the use of Greek in Marcus Aurelius' letters. Greek is frequently used as formula for common expressions outside of all literary referent. This practice suggests that, at least in bilingual circles, the use of Greek in this period was not seen as pedantic but was rather a common practice within the everyday experience of educated men.

The inclusion of affectionate words also seems to result from the epistolary form. Although Marcus Aurelius' fondness for his master is expressed in various ways, the exceptionality of affectionate superlatives at the end of missives was stressed (Cortassa (1984) 19). The most common of these superlatives in Marcus Aurelius' letters are 'homo suauissimus', 'magister optatissimus', 'dulcissimus', 'benignissimus', 'carissimus', 'amicus desiderantissimus', 'Fronto iucundissimus', 'consul amplissimus', 'amicissimus et rarissimus homo', 'dulcissima anima'. The most used of these is perhaps 'iucundissimus', which reappears over 20 times under Marcus Aurelius' pen (van den Hout (1999) 106). Superlatives and diminutives are in general one of the tools of epistolary vocabulary employed to generate intimacy between correspondents. Affectionate superlatives and discourses on the intimate bonds that join the two correspondents are part of the epistolary rhetoric, already present in Cicero (e.g. *Ad familiares* XIV, 2, 2). They are brought to their highest perfection by Symmachus, whose letters most often can be reduced to an expression of intimacy merely to serve the purpose of providing tangible proof of the connection which ties the two correspondents (e.g. III, 17, 2; Stowers (1986) 19; Brugisser (1993) 8). Besides superlatives, the affection of Marcus Aurelius for Fronto is expressed through imagery and a vocabulary sometimes drawn from an elegiac background, as was highlighted by Richlin ((2006) 69, 109, 132).

The question of homosexuality in the relationship between Marcus Aurelius and Fronto, posited by Richlin (2006), cannot be settled only on the basis of vocabulary. In the first place, as we do not have other examples of a male proximity for the period with which to compare, it would be hasty to rule on the exceptionality of this relationship between master and student. Instead, the possibility that this vocabulary can be linked to existing literary models suggests that the correspondents' subject matter was aimed at the construction of epistolary intimacy and was rooted principally in a cultural connection. That this rhetoric is exaggerated in Marcus Aurelius and Fronto's letters should not come as a surprise when the literary trends of the time are considered. After all it was during this period that sophists tended to rely on the most common topics to push their speeches in the realm of rhetoric (e.g. the proliferation of adoxographies during the Second Sophistic). The reading and analysis of Fronto's letters lead to the same conclusion. Subjects, even the most ordinary, are often lifted to a thetic level, by the use of images. The most exemplary letters that bear witness to this are the exchange in Greek

with Appian the historian (*Additamentum Epistularum* 4–5), but it may also be seen in Fronto's friendly declarations to Marcus Aurelius (notably in *Ad Marcum* I, 3; for a complete analysis and bibliography on this subject, cf. Fleury (2006) 261ff.).

The vocabulary and the familiar tone, typical of the epistolary genre, are more evident in the letters of Marcus Aurelius than of Fronto. And, indeed, this is also true when compared to other Latin correspondence. This could owe to the fact that Cicero, Seneca, and Pliny's letters were all rearranged before their diffusion. As for Fronto, his preoccupation with writing in a higher tone seems to have derived from his teacher position, because many of his letters present themselves as writing models for the princeps (e.g. *Arion*). It is important to recognize, then, that Marcus Aurelius' letters, in addition to their historical value, are loquacious witnesses of everyday epistolary practices between well-read men.

6. Marcus Aurelius' Letters: Quotations and Themes

Marcus Aurelius' letters show other substantive elements that derive from the genre. Quotations are one of these means to create a sense of commonality between correspondents (cf. Julius Victor 106, 14–16 Giomini). In this spirit, Latin authors cited by Marcus Aurelius are for the most part from the frontonian canon and are pre-ciceronian writers; Marcus Aurelius seems to be particularly fond of Cato the Elder, especially in his first years of study, but also of Sallust, Plautus, Ennius, Naevius. Unlike Fronto, who proceeds mostly by allusion, Marcus Aurelius generally introduces his quotations by the mention of the ancient author cited; he also prefers the direct quotation often while mentioning that he is quoting from memory. This difference in the use of quotation by Fronto and Marcus Aurelius, as with the tone of the letters, probably derives from their master and student relationship. While Fronto gives his student the task of locating quotations, Marcus Aurelius demonstrates to his teacher that he is able to associate the quotations and the authors (Selvatico (1981) 261, 297). Furthermore, as Selvatico ((1981) 297–300) has demonstrated, Marcus Aurelius quotes more often from Greek authors than Fronto, even though his literary referents are less extensive; quotations from Homer, Euripides, Callimachus, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Theopompus, and even those falsely attributed to an author are found (*Ad Marcum* III, 18, 1: Thucydides is said to be the author of a quote probably from Plato). The presence of errors suggests that the interest in details taken by the author is not rhetorical and that he generally quotes out of memory, without checking the accuracy of the quotation or its reference. However, if the

fact that Fronto rarely quotes Greek authors is taken into account, it could be argued that Marcus Aurelius' choice of authors and their approximate references also contributed to the creation of epistolary intimacy.

The subject matter of Marcus Aurelius' letters itself is also very often linked to the epistolary form. Contrary to Fronto's letters, which tend to contain many variants and are taken from very distinct genres (epistolary genres – consolation, greetings and health letters, recommendation – but also adoxographies, treaties, historiography, judicial and political discourses, *eroticos*), the princeps' letters are generally closer to traditional epistolary themes (news regarding health, greetings, day's and journey's description). This feature of Marcus Aurelius' letters and the comparison with Fronto's corpus seem to confirm that the ancient editor chose letters to highlight Fronto's ties with the imperial court. In this context, the princeps' letters appear to be there only to illustrate the warmth of the relationship and are not, in some ways, self-sufficient. Although themes addressed by Marcus Aurelius are intimately linked to the epistolary form, they obviously reflect the preponderant worries of the time. Concerns for the body, for instance, reappear frequently in contemporary authors, notably in Aelius Aristides' speeches, in Galen's works, and even in Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*. Furthermore, Bowersock highlighted ((1969) 71–75) that nowhere in the correspondence of Cicero, Seneca, or Pliny can be found as many references to the health of the correspondents as in the frontonian corpus. This theme is thus common in prior correspondence, but is displayed especially strongly in the correspondence between Marcus Aurelius and Fronto.

7. The Body's Discourse

Whitehorne (1977) established that Marcus Aurelius speaks of the body in 55 out of 88 letters, but that only 16 of these letters deal with his own health, while 27 make reference to Fronto's physical condition. He concluded that only 20 percent of Marcus Aurelius' letters touch on his own health, compared to 30 percent for Fronto on his own weakness. With these statistics, Whitehorne argued that the student suffered less from hypochondria than did his master. Although these numbers are interesting, a greater prudence is required before reaching any definitive conclusions in this matter. The age of the two correspondents and their own physical condition (Fronto's diseases are also discussed by Aulus Gellius) may in part explain this slight variation; the selective selection of letters by the ancient editor is without a doubt also responsible for this situation. As further proof, it may be added that the ancient editor did not see fit to discard Fronto's letters in which he simply described his aches; these letters seem to have been grouped regardless of

their chronology in Book V of *Ad Marcum Caesarem et inuicem*, in which health news and greeting letters are the essence of the corpus. This configuration tends to reveal that the discourse on the body, in the times of Fronto, but also afterward, was not necessarily perceived by the parties involved as a demonstration of weakness. It is very likely that these letters served to show the proximity of the two correspondents and the intimate ties that joined the two families (Freisenbruch (2007)). Indeed, this health concern in the correspondence is not only a 'souci de soi', in the words of Foucault (1984), but a worry for the physical wellbeing of all the members of the close circle (e.g. *Ad Marcum* IV, 11: health of Annia Galeria; V, 23: health of Annia Cornificia and of Domitia Lucilla; V, 26: health of Faustina; V, 34: good news regarding the health of the imperial family in general). All of these letters testify to the fact, then, that health news was intimately linked to the expression of friendly feelings. In the same vein, moreover, it is unusual for Marcus Aurelius to write about the health condition of his master without complaining about the painful effects of absence created by sickness, or additionally without mentioning the adverse physical consequences for his own body arising from his master's illness. The letter *Ad Marcum* V, 22 is of this nature:

You indeed are playful, but by this letter of yours you have sent me immense anxiety and intense distress, most acute pain and burning fever, so that I have no heart to sup or sleep or even study. But you would find some comfort in your speech today, whereas I, what am I to do? who have already forestalled the pleasure of hearing it and fear that your visit to Lorium may be delayed, and am in pain because you meanwhile are in pain. Farewell, my master, whose health makes my health unimpaired and assured. (Haines I, 195–97)

Health news was thus the natural basis of epistolary intimacy and an occasion to reiterate the strong feelings that bond the two correspondents. Likewise, greeting letters or responses to greetings (*Ad Marcum* III, 10; V, 46; 47 and 70) can also be associated with health letters because their aim was to wish a long life free from suffering to the addressee. This relation to the body is sometimes expressed at the beginning of the letter but often constitutes its core (e.g. *Ad Marcum* I, 2; III, 20 and 22; IV, 8 and many letters of book V). Marcus Aurelius' illnesses generally seem less serious than those of his correspondent: casual fever, chest pain, tiredness, eating difficulties, even the discovery of a scorpion in his bed. The correspondence, therefore, does not reflect the fragility of Marcus Aurelius' health evoked by his biographers (e.g. Cassius Dio LXXI, 6), especially his poor appetite and difficulty sleeping, which may well have been only a late characteristic of the emperor's physical condition. Sleep, nevertheless, is one of the recurrent themes not only in health news but also in the correspondence in general. It is possible that the

association by Fronto between Somnus and rhetoric explains the overrepresentation of this theme (Fleury (2006) 271–77).

As one of several subjects dealt with by Fronto and Marcus Aurelius, the theme of the body is a basis for rhetorical amplification: that is the essence of the sleep's vituperation (*Ad Marcum* I, 4) written by Marcus Aurelius in answer to Fronto's advice to sleep more. The scholarly consensus is that the letter to which Marcus Aurelius answers is lost, but an argument on behalf of sleep remains in the frontonian corpus (*De feriis Alsiensibus* III). In this letter, the teacher tries to convince the princeps not to use his vacation in Alsium to work by referring to many images and to the fable of the birth of Somnus. In the vituperation of sleep, Marcus Aurelius' demonstration is almost entirely based on quotation from prior authors, essentially from Homer and Ennius' epics. It must be noted that adoxographical vituperations are extremely uncommon in antiquity and that this exercise of Marcus Aurelius, praised by Fronto for its elegant vocabulary but also criticized as an 'attack too mischievous' ('peta malitiosam'; *Ad Marcum* I, 5, 5), is one of the only extant examples to remain almost complete.

8. The Didactic Discourse

Although the subject of *Ad Marcum* I, 4 is sleep, the letter belongs as well to the category of didactic letters: it is the result of an exercise proposed by Fronto, whose rules are established in his *Praise of Smoke and Dust*. It is possible to put in this category all the exchanges between Marcus Aurelius and Fronto that concern their teaching relationship, as well as Marcus' remarks on discourse and rhetoric. The role of Marcus Aurelius in these letters is not merely that of a passive admirer; he certainly constructs sentences and images (*Ad Marcum* III, 7; III, 13), reads (*Ad Marcum* II, 7; II, 8) and composes declamations (*Ad Marcum* III, 9; V, 38), frequently lays claim to passages and themes and critiques public speakers that he has had a chance to hear. One of the best examples of this critical perspective is his remark on Polemon the sophist (Philostratus, *Life of the Sophists* 530–44; *PIR*² A, 862; Puech (2002) 396):

He seems to me like a hard-working farmer endowed with the utmost shrewdness, who has laid out a large holding with corn-crops only and vines, wherein beyond question the yield is the fairest and the return the richest. But, indeed, nowhere in all that estate is there a fig tree of Pompeii, or a vegetable of Aricia, or a rose of Tarentum, nowhere a pleasant coppice or a thick-set grove, or a shady plane-tree; all for profit rather than pleasure, such as one would be bound to praise but not disposed to love. (*Ad Marcum* II, 10, 1 (Haines I, 117))

It is remarkable to note that Marcus critiques the lack of ornamentation in Polemon's speech and the overabundance of work that he saw as speaking to his lack of innate talent. Even if the surviving declamations of Polemon would tend to generate an opposite judgment, Marcus Aurelius' interpretation does not entirely go against the portrait made by Philostratus of Polemon's style (*Life of the Sophists* 542). Indeed, even though Philostratus' depiction is in essence laudatory, what Marcus Aurelius was mocking can be detected in the qualities enumerated in Polemon's biography. The demosthenian character of the sophist's thoughts, for instance, that Philostratus describes as elegant and solemn, without dullness and banality, may well have seemed frozen and arid to a young man. Yet Philostratus also writes of the passionate, combative, and resonant style, characteristic of Polemon, all of which are missing from Marcus Aurelius' summary. The negative perception of contemporary Greek orators is also perceptible in another letter that narrates a stay in Naples:

I should like to write you a longer letter, but nothing suggests itself. Stay, I have just thought of something. We have been listening to panegyrists here, Greeks, of course, but wondrous creatures, so much so that I, who am as far removed from Greek literature as is my native Caelian hill from the land of Greece, could nevertheless hope, matched with them, to be able to rival even Theopompus, the most eloquent, as I hear, of all the Greeks. So I, who am all but a breathing barbarian, have been impelled to write in Greek by men, as Caecilius says, of *impaired ignorance*. (*Ad Marcum* II, 11, 2 (Haines I, 143))

Marcus Aurelius' negative critiques here seem, on one hand, contradictory to what he wrote in his *Meditations* on the flowery style (I, 7) and, on the other, antithetical to the way Philostratus portrays the emperor in his interactions with Herodes Atticus and Aelius Aristides (cf. Pack (1947)); his efforts at consolidating chairs of rhetoric also speak to this (cf. Avotins (1975)). This perspective, however, may be explained without referring to incoherence or chronology: Fronto's answer to Polemon's critique (*Ad Marcum* I, 5) shows that the two correspondents agreed to criticize the sophist but not for the same reasons. Probably ironically, Fronto regards him as a most Attic philosopher, while Marcus Aurelius considers him as a dry orator using virtuosity at the expense of emotion. And yet, this fits with what Marcus Aurelius said regarding rhetoric in general. Indeed, when the Caesar alludes to rhetoric in his letter and to Fronto's educative task, these themes are always evaluated through the perspective of the strong feelings that bond the two correspondents. The letter in which Marcus Aurelius reacts to Fronto's professorial correction of a sentence that highlights the frankness of their friendship is a good example of this approach (*Ad Marcum* III, 13), as is the letter in which Marcus places friendship as superior to eloquence:

But I cannot express in words how that letter of yours to me, not for its eloquence or learning, but bubbling up as it does with so much kindness, brimful of such affection, sparkling with so much love, has lifted my heart up to the heavens, inspired it with the most glowing fondness, in a word, as Naevius says, filled it with a *love transcendent*. (*Ad Marcum* II, 5, 2 (Haines I, 115))

This perspective differs from Fronto's, who places rhetoric in a higher hierarchical position than friendship: for the teacher, only rhetoric can generate true love (cf. Grimal (1990) and (1992); Fleury (2006) 261–65). In Fronto's system, rhetoric is separate from philosophy for this very reason.

9. Philosophy in Marcus Aurelius' Letters

The most studied letter of Marcus is the one in which he evokes his 'conversion' to philosophy through reading Aristo (*Ad Marcum* IV, 13). Champlin ((1974) 144; (1980) 77), taking the letter as a whole (that begins with a mockery of Aufidius Victorinus as a judge), tried to demonstrate that the Aristo of the letter is not the philosopher. Although this perspective has since been discarded (Rutherford (1989); Görgemanns (1991); Grimal (1991) 85; Hadot (1992) 34), the study of Kasulke (2005) highlighted that there are very few mentions of philosophy in Marcus Aurelius' letters and has showed the necessity to re-evaluate the violence of the conflict between rhetoric and philosophy in the corpus. Indeed, besides the *Ad Marcum* IV, 13, a philosophic thought appears only once in the correspondence of the princeps (*Ad Marcum* III, 9, 2). Then again, it may be identified as one only because it is similar to an idea that Fronto destroys in the most vehement of his letters regarding the defense of rhetoric against philosophy (*De eloquentia* II, especially § 9 and 19). Marcus does not resort to philosophical commonplaces, even in genres traditionally treated according to them, as for instance in the consolation: Marcus Aurelius' comforting letters (*De nepote amisso* 1 and 3), as well as Verus' (*Ad Verum* I, 9), are only centered on emotional compassion, at variance to Fronto's *De nepote amisso* 2, which is a consolation to himself using philosophical topics (cf. Ramírez de Verger (1983); Fleury (2006) 81–99).

10. Marcus Aurelius by Himself, Marcus Aurelius for Himself

Marcus Aurelius' personality, even if well illustrated throughout the whole correspondence, is especially brought out in narrative letters, that is, those that relate details of a day or of a journey. These letters are very few in the general

corpus and are almost missing from Fronto's writings; they are almost exclusively from Marcus Aurelius' pen (*Ad Marcum* II, 11 and 16; IV, 4, 5 and 6). In them, may be found Marcus Aurelius in his daily routine as a young man and as Caesar, following Antoninus Pius to the countryside, harvesting grapes, hunting, reading, studying, visiting cities, going to the theatre, dispensing justice. These letters stand out from the whole in that they are constructed narrations, as if Marcus, through the description of daily routine, pursued his work on rhetoric and sent little pieces of homework back to his teacher. What is disconcerting in these letters is the humor: Marcus presents himself as a spirited young man with a glib tongue, who, of course, works a bit too much and a bit too late, but is nevertheless bursting with life, tenderness, and light. One of the most frequently cited letters on this subject is *Ad Marcum* II, 16:

But what, you say, was the story? When my father had got home from the vineyards, I, as usual, mounted my horse and set off along the road, and had gone some little distance when I came upon a number of sheep in the road huddled together, as happens when there is little room, with four dogs and two shepherds; that was all. Then one of the shepherds, seeing our cavalcade, said to his mate, Marry, keep an eye on those mounted fellows, they be rare hands at pillaging. Hearing that, I dug the spurs into my horse and galloped full tilt into the flock. Frightened out of their wits, they ran helter-skelter bleating and fleeing in all directions. The shepherd whirled his crook at us. It fell on my equerry who was following me. We got clear off. So it chanced that he, who feared to lose his sheep, lost his crook. Do you think this a fiction? It really took place: yes, and there is more I could write to you of that adventure, but here comes the messenger to call me to my bath. Farewell, my sweetest of masters, most honoured and most unique of men, my joy, my treasure, my delight. (Haines I, 151–53)

In these letters, the rhetorical play is always present, sometimes in the ways anecdotes are told, sometimes in the use of playful imagery or puns, which are frequent in Marcus' letters as a whole. The second part of the *Ad Marcum* IV, 4 illustrates this. After the story of his visit to Anagnia from an antiquarian point of view, Marcus insists that Fronto write often to him:

Nam decem partibus tuas litteras legere malim quam omne Massicos aut Gauranos plamites; nam Signini quidem isti nimis rancidos racemos et acidos acinos habent, quod uinum malim quam mustum bibere. Praeterea istas uuas multo commodius passas quam puberes manducare; nam profecto malim eas pedibus calcare quam dentibus comesse. Sed tamen propitiae placataeque sint et mihi pro istis iocularibus bonam ueniam duint. Vale mihi homo amicissime, suauissime, disertissime, magister dulcissime. Quom uidebis in dolio mustum feruere, in mentem tibi ueniat mihi sic in pectore tuum desiderium scatere et abundare et spumas facere. Semper uale.

For I would ten times rather have the run of your letters than of all the vineyards of the Massic and the Gauran Mount: for your clusters of Signia are too nauseous and their berries too bitter, wherefore I would prefer their wine to their must for drinking. Besides it is much more agreeable to masticate the grapes parched than pulpy, for beyond question I would rather stamp them with my feet than champ them with my teeth. Yet may they be gracious and forgiving, and for these pleasantries a kindly pardon grant. Farewell, to me most affectionate, most delightful, most eloquent of men, master most sweet. When you see the must fermenting in the cask, let it remind you that my longing for you wells up thus and overflows and foams in my breast. Fare ever well. (§ 2–3 (Haines I, 177))

Other examples of Marcus' joyful temper could just as suitably be presented here, whether in the narrative letters or in the whole correspondence. The tone rarely becomes heavy and, when it does, especially when Marcus expresses concerns for his master's health or the depth of his attachment to him, this serious tone is inseparable from rhetorical emphasis. Some traits of personality present in his *Meditations* and highlighted by ancient historians are also found in the letters: integrity and seriousness in task, love for truth, mistrust of self contentment, love of the family, frugality. However, those characteristics of Marcus' personality appear mainly in Fronto's letters and not in Marcus Aurelius' writings.

Hence, Marcus' own portrait of himself seems incongruent with the introspective man of the *Meditations* and with the idealized emperor presented by ancient biographers and historians. Is it a matter of age, context, or genre? It is obvious that the letters dated after the rise of Marcus Aurelius to the Imperial power are shorter and drier, even if we occasionally find in them the light tone (*De feriis Alsicensibus* 4) and the strong sentiment (*Ad Antoninum* I, 4) typical of those prior to 161. However, the reduced nature of the sample (15/88) restrains us from coming to conclusions on the evolution of Marcus' personality from 149 to circa 166. It is however evident that nothing prevents Marcus Aurelius, as all other human beings, from having many facets, a public one that reflects the way the emperor should be seen, a personal one where he struggles to be a better man, and another also found in the letters, more light-hearted and emotional, and appropriate to the development of friendship and intimacy, the typical goal of all correspondences.

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CHAPTER 5

Epigraphic Records

Péter Kovács

Beside the ancient historical works, texts on papyri, and coin legends the most important sources concerning the Roman Imperial period (including the Antonine era) are the inscriptions (*tituli* in Latin, *epigrammata* in Greek) written (cut, scratched, painted) on stone, metal (bronze, lead, gold) or wood or on portable objects. The science dealing with inscriptions is called epigraphy. At least 500 000 Latin and 100 000 Greek stone inscriptions have been found and numerous inscriptions are discovered every year. The custom of erecting inscriptions was widespread in antiquity and was a popular way of communication. Hence, many different inscription types exist and they cover all aspects of life. The main groups are the funerary (sepulchral or *tituli sepulcrales*), the dedicatory (votive or *tituli sacri*), the honorary (*tituli honorarii*) and the building inscriptions of public works (*tituli operum publicorum*). Another important group of inscriptions are the public and private documents (*acta*, mostly their copies survived on stone or bronze). These can be treaties (*foedera*), laws (*leges*), decrees of the Roman senate (*senatus consulta*) or cities, decrees of magistrates and emperors (*constitutiones: decreta, mandata, rescripta, orationes*) and military diplomas. The so-called *instrumenta domestica* inscriptions (on portable objects) also have their own importance but they are outside the scope of this paper. Of course, I cannot deal with every inscription from the reign of Marcus Aurelius but the historically most relevant ones will be mentioned in the following part of the paper. My selection mainly includes inscriptions erected by the emperor or by his family members and inscriptions that mention them or important historical persons (friends [*amici*], senators, equestrians, or other famous persons) or events of this period.

1. Early Life and Family

The family members of Marcus Aurelius, the Anni Veri, are well known from inscriptions (Birley (1987) 243–45). M. (Catilius Severus) Annius Verus was the original name of Marcus Aurelius. (*PIR*² A 697) and he was born on April 26, 121. His birthday (*dies natalis*) was a three-day-long feast still in the third century (*CIL* XII 5905). In 139 the title *caesar* was already used on his honorary inscriptions after his adoption by Antoninus Pius (cf. *CIL* VI 40449–50). In this period he was officially called M. (Aelius) Aurelius Verus Caesar (*ILS* 353–55) or simply Marcus Aurelius Caesar (*CIL* VI 1000 = *ILS* 356, 1008, 1009 = *ILS* 2012). The first recorded public appearance of the new *caesar* was in 138 when Marcus supported a request for the forming of the organization for the young men (*corpus iuvenum*) of Cyzicus in Asia, known from a fragmentary inscription (*ILS* 7190). Lucius Verus, the son of Aelius Caesar was called L. Aelius Aurelius Commodus (*ILS* 357–58). After 161 Marcus Aurelius called himself Imperator Caesar M. Aurelius Antoninus Augustus as coin legends and inscriptions show. The most important source concerning the chronology is the so-called *Fasti Ostienses* (*Inscr.It.* XIII,1) which mentions that the city of Ostia erected statues of the new caesar in 140, also mentions the marriage of Marcus and Faustina in 145, the birth of their first children in 147 and 152 and the death of Cornificia, Marcus' sister also in 152. The birth of Marcus' otherwise unknown son in 158 (he died soon thereafter) was mentioned in a Greek inscription from Smyrna that contains the congratulation of the synod of the temple of Dionysus and the *caesar's* answer (*IGR* IV 1399). The funerary inscriptions of his sons and daughter, T. Aurelius Antoninus, T. Aelius Aurelius, and Domitia Faustina were found in Hadrian's Mausoleum (*CIL* VI 993–95 (cf. 31120) = *ILS* 383–85). Some of his teachers (mentioned in the *Meditations* I.6–15 and *HA Vita Marci* 2.4; Dio LXXIII.35.1) are also attested on inscriptions like C. Claudius Maximus who was the *iuridicus* (legate with administrative work) of Aelius Caesar in Pannoniae in 136–37, later governor of Pannonia inferior (between 137 and 141?) and superior (between 150 and 154) (Alföldy (1977) 143, 236; *ILS* 1062; *CIL* XVI 99, 104; *ZPE* 174 (2010) 277–79 n. 1 [his *praenomen* (personal name) mentioned only in this new inscription from Odium/Almásfüzitő]). Several Greek inscriptions also from this period have been mentioned by Herodes Atticus (cf. Ameling (1983)). Cornelius Fronto was mentioned 50 years later in the third century as consul and master of the emperors Lucius and Antoninus (*magister imperatorum Luci et Antonini*) (*ILS* 1129). One of Commodus' teachers mentioned in the *Historia Augusta* (*Vita Commodi* 1.6) was T. Aius Sanctus whose funerary inscription survived as well (*CIL* VI 41118). Antoninus Pius died in March of 161 and he was buried in

Hadrian's Mausoleum (*ILS* 346) and Marcus Aurelius followed him on the throne. The base of the column of the deified Antoninus and Faustina has also survived, but not the column (*ILS* 347). In the case of their temple at the Forum Romanum the name of the deified Antoninus was also added to the inscription as it was built after Faustina's death in 140 (*ILS* 348).

2. Marcus Aurelius as Emperor

Several copies of imperial constitutions and edicts of governors are known from Marcus' reign. C. Popilius Carus Pedo, the governor (*proconsul*) of the province of Asia between 162 and 164, issued an edict concerning the games of Artemis in Ephesus (*SIG*³ 867) and it remained together with the decree of the citizens of Ephesus. The rescript of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius to Ulpius Eurycles, the curator (financial commissioner) of the city (honored earlier: Oliver (1989) no. 155), concerning the old imperial images erected in the *synedrion* (council hall) and debts (dated to 163 or 164) came to light from the same city (*OGIS* 508 = Oliver (1989) no. 170). The letter of the praetorian prefects concerning the infringement of imperial rights by municipal magistrates is known from Saepinum in Central Italy (169–72; *CIL* IX 2438) and it shows how a quarrel between imperial employees and municipal magistrates has been settled by the prefects. The copy also contains the letters of an imperial official in an imperial office and his aide. A long but fragmentary edict (called as letter in text) of Marcus Aurelius to the Athenians dated to 174/5 also survived on several appeals, the members of the Areopagus who should have been expelled because of three-generation rule (*trigonia*) (whose grandparents were not free). The Athenians asked the rule be relaxed and Marcus accedes to their request and the case (trial) of Herodes Atticus (Oliver (1989) no. 184). Later in 176 Marcus established together with Commodus a sacred *gerusia* (council of elders) in Athens and a series of letters survived addressed mainly to the *gerusia* dated between 177 and 184 engraved on a large plaque, about the statues of the emperors in precious metals from 179 (Marcus recommended only bronze ones and only busts instead of full-length statues because the other ones made from precious metals could express divine honors) (Oliver (1989) nos. 193–97 (under Marcus), 198–203 (under Commodus)). In the 160s the emperors granted Roman citizenship to Iulianus, the chieftain of *Zegrenses* (a local tribe in Mauretania) and his family members. In 177 the new members of the family asked for citizenship too. The request went through the provincial (procuratorial) and imperial chancery and the whole text of the document with the official acts and signatures of the witnesses (including the praetorian prefect) was engraved on a bronze tablet and set up on the forum of

Banasa (so-called *tabula Banasitana*: *AE* (1971) 534). The text clearly shows how effectively the chancery worked, since all the new citizens were recorded in a register from Augustus. In the same year Marcus Aurelius wrote to the citizens of Miletus about the alteration of the status of an expensive festival proposed by the polis and the text contains the emperor's oration in Latin (instead of the *senatus consultum*) (*AE* (1977) 801 = Oliver (1989) no. 192). Two copies of the same speech of an unknown Gaulish (?) senator held in the senate between 177 and 180 came to light in Italica in Hispania and in Sardis in Asia Minor (inscribed on bronze and marble tablets) concerning the reduction of high costs of gladiatorial games (*senatus consultum de sumptibus gladiatoris minuendis*: *ILS* 5163, 9340). These inscriptions most probably refer to the bad financial situation of the state because of the Marcomannic wars. A people's decree of Thespieae in Boeotia concerning the levy of local corps of volunteers from the town is known from the years 170–71 (*SEG* 39, 456 = 42, 432). The inscription can probably be connected to the Costobocian-Sarmatian invasion in 170. A copy of a Greek letter of the Tyrians, who were staying in Puteoli, to Tyrus, their Phoenician hometown and the answer from the year 174 was found in Puteoli (*IG* XIV 830 = *OGIS* 595 = *IGR* I 421). They successfully requested financial aid from Tyrus for their commercial station in Puteoli. Two fragmentary letters of Marcus Aurelius to the Delphians were most probably sent during the second phase of first Marcomannic war between 172 and 175 from Viminacium (Oliver (1989) nos. 181–82, 204) and they clearly show that Viminacium (modern Kostolac in Serbia) in Moesia superior was an imperial residence in this period. The text about the appointment (*codicillus* – imperial letter of appointment) of Domitius Marsianus as procurator of crown property in Gaul in 178 survived on his statue base set up in Bulla Regia (*AE* (1962) 183).

Hundreds of honorary inscriptions erected to Marcus Aurelius and his co-emperors are known from the city of Rome (e.g. *CIL* VI 1008–13, 40551–59), Italy and from the provinces; most of them are statue bases as can be seen in Munk Højte's corpus (Munk Højte (2005) 509–30 (Lucius Verus 1–139), 531–69 (Marcus Aurelius 1–26), 569–70 (uncertain 1–11), 571 (Avidius Cassius 1), cf. 604–605). In 166 an honorary inscription (statue base) was erected to Marcus Aurelius' son, M. Annianus Verus (who died very young) in Sufetula in the African Byzacena (*ILS* 387). Few surviving building inscriptions during the reign of Marcus Aurelius can actually be connected to the emperors (Horster (2001) 89, 442). In Rome Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus rebuilt a monument originally built by Trajan in the villa of Livia by the Prima Porta (*CIL* VI 965); a fragment dated between 161 and 164 attests restoration works in Marcellus' theatre (*CIL* VI 3781 = 31355 = 40551) and a marble fragment found during the excavations of the Largo Argentina can be connected to Marcus Aurelius or Lucius Verus (*CIL* VI 40566). The customs boundary of the city was marked by boundary stones (*lapides*) because of

disputes under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (*CIL* VI 1016a–c = 31227 a–c, 1016d). This line has been later followed when the Aurelian walls were built. Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus also built the walls (?) of the municipium Diana Veteranorum in Numidia in 161 by the legio III Augusta (see *CIL* VIII 4590 about the elevation of the settlement to the rank of municipium). Around 164/5 an arch was dedicated to the emperors here (*CIL* VIII 4591 = 18648, 4592). They also rebuilt the roads and sanctuaries and baths of the Forum Claudii Ceutronum Axima, which had been hit by heavy floods of the river Isère in the Alpes Graiae (*CIL* XII 107 = ILS 5968). They probably also rebuilt a *schola* building (a hall/meeting place) destroyed by fire in Colonia Ulpia Traiana (modern Xanten) in Germania Inferior (*CIL* XIII 8643), and Marcus Aurelius is responsible for the rebuilding of an unidentified building in Ariminum in 174 (*CIL* XI 371). In 161 the city walls of Apulum in Dacia were also built by the emperors (*CIL* III 1171). The milestones of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (and Commodus) mainly concentrated in the Rhine and Danubian provinces (Rathmann (2001) 74, 234–35).

Several entire legions or detachments from European provinces took part in Lucius Verus' Parthian wars between 162 and 166 as their inscriptions attest. Among these there are the troops of the legio I Minerva from Bonna (modern Bonn) (*ILS* 1097–98), the legio II adiutrix from Aquincum (modern Budapest) (*ILS* 1091, 8977), the legio V Macedonica from Troesmis (modern Iglîța) (*ILS* 2311) or the legio X gemina from Vindobona (modern Vienna) under the command of P. Iulius Geminius Marcianus (*CIL* VIII 7050–51). Roman legionary and auxiliary forces entered into Osrhoene from Armenia, and occupied Anthemusia, south-west of Edessa as the honorary inscription of their commander, M. Claudius Fronto shows ('leg(atus) Augg(ustorum) pr(o) pr(aetore) exercitus legionarii et auxiliior(um) per Orientem in Armeniam et Osrhoenam et Anthemusiam ductorum'). Marcianus originally commanded the legio Minervia into Parthia ('leg(atus) Augg(ustorum) legioni(s) primae Minerviae in ex{s}peditionem Parthicam deducendae': *ILS* 1098). An honorary inscription erected to the sophist, T. Flavius Damianus in Ephesus reports that he paid the Roman soldiers' corn supply in the town (201 200 medimnoi = circa 7 000 tons in 13 months). A tribune of the legio III Gallica, Iunius Maximus was the one who brought the message of the victory to Rome as Cornelius Fronto (*Ad amicos* I.6) and the Latin inscription of his statue base from Ephesus (*AE* (1979) 601 = *IvEph* 811: *suscipiens munus laureatarum victoriae Parthicae*) report. In 166 before the Roman victory Claudius Fronto was sent back together with the Syrian governor Iulius Verus to Italy with an urgent mission, the recruitment of two new legions, the legio II and III Italica ('missus ad iuventutem per Italiam legendam', in Ti. Claudius Proculus Cornelianus' [who was his equestrian assistant] inscription: *AE* (1956) 123: 'ad dilectum cum Iulio Vero per Italiam tironum II leg(ionum) Italicae').

The raising of new legions can be connected either to the earlier annihilation of Roman legions or to Marcus' planned northern campaign. The dangerous situation of the Danubian provinces was also proven by the fact that Claudius Pompeianus (cos. 162) was appointed as consular to govern Lower Pannonia (a one-legion province in the second century) (*CIL* XVI 123; *RMD* III 181; according to a new military diploma he was consul already in 162: *ZPE* 173 (2010) 223–36). Lucilla, Verus' wife was pregnant again in 166 as an altar dedicated to Iuno Lucina (patroness of childbirth) erected in Rome for the health of the house of the emperors by a minor official on 23 August 166 shows (*ILS* 366). Epigraphic records cannot be directly connected to the great plague after the Parthian War as it was thought earlier (e.g. Kaibel (1879) 375, 1034, 1030; *IG* V 1, 816; *IGR* IV 360, 1498). A funerary inscription from Norican Bedaium mentions a family whose members *per luem vita functi sunt* (died from the plague: *CIL* III 5567 but the exact date remains uncertain). However, I suggest that the effect of the plague can rather be examined in the loss of manpower in Egypt on papyri or elsewhere on inscriptions. The number of miners of a funerary club in Alburnus Maior had fallen from 54 to 17 (*ILS* 7215a) and the numbers of the Tyrians in Puetoli had also fallen (*OGIS* 595). The album of the cult members of a Mithraeum from the year 184 in Virunum can also be added to these deaths (a *theta nigrum* ['black theta' means death] was added to the names of the deceased members: *AE* (1994) 1334 = (1996) 1189 = (1998) 1016). The members of the cult had to gather to rebuild the sanctuary and *mortalitatis causa*.

During Avidius Cassius' revolt in 175 vexillations containing troops from Illyricum were sent to Rome for the protection of the city, but especially in order to calm down the arising panic (*Vita Marci* 25.2; *Vita Avidius Cassius* 7.7) (*AE* (1920) 45: 'praepositus vexillationibus ex Illyrico missis ab Imperatore Divo Marco Antonino ad tutelam urbis'). After Cassius' death Marcus Aurelius travelled to the east to visit these provinces and a special Barbarian cavalry troop under Roman command (*AE* (1956) 124) followed him too.

In Hadrian's Mausoleum the funerary inscription of Lucius Verus, who died in 169, has survived (*ILS* 369). The fragmentary funerary inscription of Marcus Aurelius concerning his cremation in October 180 also has been found near the Montecitorio in Rome (*CIL* VI 36996 = 40561). The column of Marcus Aurelius depicting scenes of the Marcomannic wars was originally Marcus Aurelius' and Faustina's funerary monument as Adrastus' inscription clearly shows (*CIL* VI 1585a–b + pp. 4715–16 = *ILS* 5920) where the monument was called 'columna centenaria Divorum Marci et Faustinae' (100-feet-high column of the deified Marcus and Faustina), 'columna divi Marci, columna centenaria and columna centenaria divi Marci'. *ILS* 5920 is a copy of official documents issued between April and September 193 (that means the

monument was surely built before this date under Commodus' reign). Adrastus as *libertus* and *procurator* (here: custodian) of the column, requested permission from the *officium operum publicorum* (office of public buildings) to build a small private house (*hospitium, habitatio*) on public land instead of his previous small custodian's hut (*cannaba*) unearthed about 60 meters to the west of the column. Unfortunately, the building inscription of the column on the base did not survive.

3. The Marcomannic Wars

Marcus Aurelius' northern or Danubian or Marcomannic wars have to be studied separately because of their importance (during his reign the emperor spent 11 years in the Danube region (168 to 175 and 178 to 180)) and the very high number of epigraphic records concerning these events. Most of the epigraphic sources are honorary inscriptions of Marcus Aurelius' generals whose career was documented on the inscriptions of the wars. Based on inscriptions it became clear that there were three different wars of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.

The first war (167–75) was called:

bellum Germanicum (German war): *CIL* VI 1449 + p. 4700 = *ILS* 1107, 1549 = *ILS* 1100, 31856 = 41271 = *ILS* 1327, VIII 9372, IX 2849, XI 6055 = *ILS* 2743, XI 7264 = *ILS* 9194;

bellum Germanicum et Sarmaticum (German and Sarmatian war): *CIL* VI 31856 = *ILS* 1327;

expeditio prima Germanica (first campaign against the Germans): *CIL* VI 1540 = 41145 = *ILS* 1112; *AE* (1998) 1087;

prima expeditio Germanica felicissima (the most fortunate first campaign against the Germans): *CIL* VI 8541 = *ILS* 1573;

expeditio Germanica et Sarmatica (campaign against the Germans and Sarmatians): *AE* (1920) 45;

expeditio Naris(tica) (campaign against the Naristae): *CIL* III 4310 = 10969 = *AE* (1962) 221 = *RIU* 509;

proelia adversum Germanos et Iazyges (battles against the Germans and Jazyges): *CIL* VI 1377 = 41142 = *ILS* 1098.

The name of the second war (178–80) was:

expeditio secunda Germanica (second campaign against the Germans): *AE* (1956) 124;

expeditio Germanica secunda: *RIT* 130 = *CIL* II 4114 = *ILS* 1140;

expeditio II felicissima Germanica (the most fortunate second campaign against the Germans): *CIL* V 2155 = *ILS* 1574;
secunda expeditio Germanica felicissima: *CIL* VI 8541 = *ILS* 1573;
expeditio Germanica Sarmatica (campaign against the Germans and Sarmatians): *CIL* VI 1540 = 41145 = *ILS* 1112;
expeditio Sarmatica (campaign against the Sarmatians): *CIL* X 408 = *ILS* 1117;
victoria Germanica et Sarmatic(a) (victory over the Germans and Sarmatians): *CIL* VI 1599 = 31828 = 41141 = *ILS* 1326;
triumphus felicissimus Germanicus secundus (the most fortunate second victory over the Germans): *CIL* XIV 2922 = *ILS* 1420;
expeditio Burica (campaign against the Buri): *CIL* III 5937.

The third war (already under Commodus' reign) was called:

expeditio felicissima III Germanica (the most fortunate third campaign against the Germans): *CIL* V 2155 = *ILS* 1574.

Cassius Dio described in detail the first event of the war, the Langobard-Obian invasion into Upper Pannonia in 167 (LXXI.3.1). Based on their inscriptions, the governor of Upper Pannonia can be identified with M. Iallius Bassius (earlier governor of Lower Pannonia, *comes* [companion] of Lucius in the Parthian war; later he also led the peace talks with eleven Barbarian tribes (Cassius Dio LXXI.1.3a): *CIL* XII 2718 = 2719; *RMD* 102; *AE* (2004) 1923; *TitAq* 183) and the commander, who led the Roman forces was M. Macrinus Avitus Vindex, a *praefectus alae* (cavalry commander) (*CIL* VI 1449 = *ILS* 1107). After this victory the troops had hailed Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus as *imperator* for the fifth time (*CIL* XVI 123 (officially used after 168)). During 167 (based on the latest document after May) several wax tablets (local records, treaties, etc.) were hidden in the Transylvanian mines of Alburnus maior (modern Rosia Muntana) (*CIL* III pp. 921–60 nos. I–XXV).

During the campaign of 168/9 the residence of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus was Aquileia, according to literary sources. The only epigraphic evidence of this is the Egyptian magician's, Arnuphis' altar, which has been found in Aquileia. Arnuphis certainly belonged to the emperor's court (*AE* (1934) 245). In 169 an equestrian statue, inscribed with a long, but unfortunately very fragmentary eulogy was erected to Claudius Pompeianus in Rome that listed his merits as the governor of Lower Pannonia (*CIL* VI 41120). Based on the literary sources, the above-mentioned epidemic caused heavy losses to the Roman army fighting against the Germans in 168 in Aquileia as well (Galen, *De praecognitione* 9.5–6.8, *De libris propriis liber* XIX, 17–19), even the praetorian prefect, Furius Victorinus and part of his army died due to the epidemic (*Vita*

Marci 14.5): His statue base was found in Rome (*CIL* VI 1937* = 39440A = 41143 = II 396* = V 648* = XIV 440* = ILS 9002). Unfortunately, the text does not mention the cause of his death.

The exact date of the Marcomann-Quadian invasion into Italy is heavily disputed (between 167–71) and the epigraphic evidence is unfortunately missing. Only in the case of a Pannonian freedman, L. Atilius Saturninus from Scarbantia (modern Sopron) (but he was buried in Aquileia), can it be supposed that he was the victim of the invasion (*ILS* 8507). His funerary altar can be dated to the second half of the second century. He was killed by intruding *latrones* (which could mean enemy as well) ('interfectus a latronibus intrusis'). Beside the *Vita Marci* 14.6 and Ammianus Marcellinus 29.6.1, only the honorary inscription of Q. Antistius Adventus' mentions the establishment of the *praetentura Italiae et Alpium* (special Alpine zone for protecting Italy and the Alps) around 168 (*ILS* 8977, there is another one from Rome, but it is too fragmentary: *CIL* VI 41119). Antistius Adventus was the military commander (*legatus Augusti*) of this zone, with the two newly raised legions, the legio II and III Italica at his disposal (*CIL* III 1979 = *ILS* 2616 and *CIL* V 5032, 5036). Four building inscriptions can be connected to the *praetentura*. The first one was found at Atrans in the area of the border of Noricum (*CIL* III 11675 = *AE* (1958) 247). According to this Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus built something (unfortunately, the stone slab is very fragmentary, hence it cannot be said what they actually built). The other three inscriptions are concerning the construction of the city wall of Saloniae (close to modern Solin) in Dalmatia in 170 (*CIL* III 1979 = *ILS* 2616; *CIL* III 1980, 6374 = *ILS* 2617). According to them, the builders were military units: vexillation of the legio II pia and III concors and cohorts I and II (milliaria) Delmatarum. Every unit built a relatively short section of the wall (200 or 800 feet (*pedes* CC, DCCC + one tower)). This can refer to the fact that the wall was constructed in a hurry. Besides the Italian invasion the Roman troops was defeated several times. C. Vettius Sabinianus Iulius Hospes around 170 as the *legatus* of legio XIII gemina was also entrusted *cum iurisdicatu Pannoniae Superioris* (with the administration of justice of Upper Pannonia: *AE* (1920) 45) because the governor of Upper Pannonia had probably died during the war. As the *Vita Marci* 22.7 states during the war many nobles were killed; for them he erected statues on the Forum of Trajan. Many of these statue bases have been found on the forum (Cassius Dio LXXI.3.5 and *CIL* VI 41140–52): It is noteworthy to mention the case of Bassaeus Rufus, the *praefectus praetorio* (died around 179/80) (*CIL* VI 41141 = *ILS* 1326). Three statues have been erected to him ('statua armata, alia in civili amictu, tertia loricata' = a statue in armor, another one in civilian custom, and a cuirass statue). Claudius Fronto, the joint legate of Upper Moesia and the Three Dacias also belonged to them. Claudius Fronto after several battles with favorable outcomes against the

Germans and Iazyges died around 170 fighting to the last for the republic ('post aliquot (!) secunda proelia adversum Germanos et Íazyges ad postremum pró r(e) p(ublica) fortiter pugnáns ceciderit'). In return the senate erected a statue to him, commemorating his memory (*CIL* VI 1377 = 31640 = 41142 + pp. 3141, 3805, 4948 = *ILS* 1098). After Fronto's death still in 170 in the famous Costobocian-Sarmatian invasion of the Balkans and the Peloponnesus among others the sanctuary of Eleusis was destroyed (besides the numerous literary sources an inscription also mentions this event: *IG* II² 3411).

The very poor situation of the Roman army can be pointed out in the case of the recruits as well. Even in the case of the praetorian guards (cf. *CIL* VI 2382) the number of new recruits had increased, and no discharges could be observed, or on a much smaller scale than for instance in AD 170 (*CIL* VI 3330: 32521–22). The best example from the provinces for this is the *laterculus* of 195 of the egio VII Claudia, during which the soldiers recruited in 169 were discharged (*CIL* III 14507 = *IMS* II 53). The number of the veterans is twofold compared to an average conscription. It is also not a coincidence that the issuing of military discharge documents was suspended between 167 and 168 and between 177 and 178 (e.g. *AE* (2006) 1837). Several funerary *stelae* (especially family gravestones from Savaria (modern Szombathely)) demonstrate the devastation among provincials in Pannonia where after the formula 'qui/quae vixit annos' (who lived . . . years) the age of the deceased is not given (its place remained empty) (most probably due to the death of their relatives) (*CIL* III 4224; *RIU* 49, 54–55, 57, 61–62, 64–67, 89–91, 93, 116, 126; *TRH* 28).

Between 169 and 172 when the campaigns were mainly directed against the Marcomanni and Quadi the residence of Marcus Aurelius was in Carnuntum (modern Petronell) in Upper Pannonia as the written sources demonstrate (Eutropius VIII.13; Aurelius Victor 16.13; Orosius 7.15.6; Hieronymus, *Chronicon* 207e (AD 177!); Prosper Tiro 703 p. 431). Despite earlier opinions, epigraphic records do not attest it (earlier hypotheses connected the altars dedicated to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Karnuntinus* from the Pfaffenberg sanctuary on June 11 (each year), however it has nothing to do with the rain miracle or with the emperor's stay in Carnuntum [cf. Piso (2003)]). Following the campaign of 172 Marcus Aurelius received the victory epithet *Germanicus* (Dio LXXI.3.5; *CIL* III 1450 = *ILS* 370, 6121, 7409, VIII 4209). During the second phase of the first war (against the Sarmatians between 172 and 175) Marcus Aurelius resided in Sirmium and in Viminacium as besides the literary sources some inscriptions attest this, as well. In Sirmium the trial of Herodes Atticus was held (Philostratus, *Vita sophistarum* II.1.26–32 (559–62)) and later – as an inscription says – he returned to Attica (from the land of the Sarmatians, i.e. Pannonia: *IG* II² 3606). According to the *CIL* II 4208 = II² XIV, 2 1193 = *ILS* 6928 inscription C. Valerius Valens was sent as an envoy to

Sirmium as well, and later a statue was erected to him in Tarraco because of his successful mission on the taxes (at his own expense) in Sirmium at the emperor's court (*ob legationem censualem gratuitam Sirmi pro(s)pere gestam (a)put imperator(em)*). On March 18, 175 in Sirmium a young *lanista* (owner and trainer of gladiators) wrote down his testament (its copy found in stone in Cefalù) in which he asked his father to free his slave (*CIL X 7457 = ILS 8377*). Two imperial epistles to the Delphians were sent from Viminacium (Oliver (1989) nos. 181–82, 204).

The only authentic epigraphic evidence for Marcus Aurelius' rain miracle, which happened around 172, on the land of the *Cotini* or *Quadi* is an altar dedicated to Isis. The altar was found in Aquileia and dedicated by Arnuphis (*AE* (1934) 245), who according to the version of Cassius Dio (LXXI.8.4) was an Egyptian magician (sacred scribe [*hierogrammateus*] of Egypt) and he invoked the aid of Hermes Aegios and the rain to the thirsty Roman soldiers. He belonged most probably to Marcus' retinue and that is why he erected this altar around 169 in Aquileia when the emperors spent the winter here. A recently found inscription from Sarmizegetusa attests the participation of a detachment of the legio XV Apollinaris from Cappadocia in the Marcomannic wars (*AE* (1998) 1087). It is important from the point of view of the rain miracle, because the other Cappadocian legion, the legio XII fulminata, was connected to the Christian version of the miracle (mentioned by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* V.5.4 and Xiphilinus [Dio LXXI.9.5–6]) whose praying Christian soldiers would have invoked the rain.

Based on a recently found inscription at Leányfalu in Hungary (*RIU*840) the raising of two new Syrian cohorts (transferred to Lower Pannonia) took place in 175 and they can be connected to the emperors' eastern journey. These were the cohorts I milliaria Aurelia Antoniniana Surorum garrisoned in Ulcisia Castra (modern Szentendre) and the cohorts I milliaria Hemesenorum (from the Syrian town Hemesa) in Intercisa (modern Dunaújváros). The honorary inscription was erected by the reorganized 'cohors I milliaria Aurelia Antoniniana nova Severiana' for Septimius Severus and his son in 195 but at the end of the text there was an addition: 'const(ituta) Pisone et Iul(iano) co(n)s(ulibus)', which is a consular date for the establishment of the cohorts in 175. The text of Marcus' triumphal arch built after the triumph at the end of 176 survived (but the arch itself did not) (*CIL VI 1014*) and according to that it was built because, surpassing all the glories of all the greatest emperors before him, he wiped out or subjugated the most warlike peoples ('quod omnes omnium ante se maximorum imperatorum glorias supergressus bellicosissimis gentibus deletis et subactis').

In Baetican towns of Italica and Singilia Barba statue bases were erected to the procurator of Mauretania, Vallius Maximianus (to the *fortissimus dux*, to the very brave commander), who wiped out the Maurish invaders from the

province in 177 ('ob merita et quoad provinciam Baeticam caesis hostibus paci pristinae restituerit' – because of his merits and because he killed the enemy and restored the old peace of the province of Baetica: *ILS* 1354, 'ob municipium diutina obsidione et bello Maurorum liberatum' – because the town was liberated by him from the long siege and the Maurish war: *ILS* 1354a). After the outbreak of the second war in 178 the situation deteriorated to such an extent that the two emperors from March 178 (*CIL* XVI 128) ceased using their titles of *Germanicus* and *Sarmaticus*.

Almost all the events of Marcus Aurelius' two Marcomannic wars can be followed in M. Valerius Maximianus' honorary inscription, erected by the city council, found in the Nummidian Diana Veteranorum (*AE* (1956) 124) (cf. Helvius Pertinax's fragmentary honorary inscription found at Brühl (erected by the *Agrippinenses* (citizens of Colonia Agrippina)) (*AE* (1963) 52)) (cf. Alföldy (1974)). During the beginning of his career the Pannonian Maximianus born in Poetovio (modern Ptuj) took part in Lucius Verus' Parthian wars and as an equestrian commander he had to supervise the Black Sea coast region in Pontus. Around 170/1 he was given a special combined force of fleet soldiers and Maurish cavalrymen in order to conduct supplies down the Danube to the Pannonian armies ('ad deducend(a) per Danuvium quae in annonam Panno(niae) utriusq(ue) exercit(uum) denavigarent'). During the same war around 172/3 he was again awarded military decorations (publicly praised by the emperor Antoninus Augustus and presented with a horse, *phalerae*, and arms) as *praefectus alae* (cavalry commander) because he slew with his own hands Valao the chieftain of the Naristae ('quod manu sua ducem Naristarum Valaonem/interemisse') and attained the *militia quarta*. There is another epigraphic record of this campaign that proves that the legio I adiutrix also participated in this campaign. The grave inscription of Aelius Septimus, an *optio* of the legio I adiutrix found in Brigetio (*CIL* III 4310 = 10969 = *AE* (1962) 221 = *RIU* 509) states that he died in the campaign against the Varistae ('desideratus est [in expedi(tione)] Varistae'). Maximianus in 175 with a rank of a procurator was put in charge of a special force of Marcomanni Quadi and Naristae ('praep(ositus) equitib(us) gent(ium) Marcomannor(um) Narist(arum) Quador(um)') and followed the emperor to the east to punish the eastern revolt of Avidius Cassius ('ad vindictam Orientalis motus'). In 176 he again had a special mission. He became the procurator of Lower Moesia with the task of capturing a band of Brisean bandits on the borders of Macedonia and Thrace ('ad detrahendam Briseorum latronum manum in confinio Macedon(iae) et Thrac(iae)'). In the following year he became the equestrian procurator of Upper Moesia and Dacia Porolissensis. In 178 he was chosen by the Most Sacred Emperors to be a member of the Most Honorable Order among the former praetors and he immediately became *legatus legionis* (legionary commander) in Pannonia Superior. During the winter

of 179/80 as commander of the legio II adiutrix in Aquincum he was the commander of the detachments wintering at Leugaricio (modern Trenčín in Slovakia) ('praep(ositus) vexil(ationum) Leugaricione hiemantium'). At the same place 120 km north of the Danube in the Barbaricum his vexillation erected a votive inscription to Victoria Augustorum (*CIL* III 13439 = *ILS* 9122). The latter event was also referred to by Cassius Dio who mentioned that, in the winter of 179/80, 20 000 Roman soldiers garrisoned both in the land of the Marcomanni and Quadi (*LXXI.20*). Maximianus later became the commander of another legion in Dacia and the last known stage of his career was the governorship of Numidia under Commodus. The 'vexil(atio) leg(ionis) III Aug(ustae)' attested 'aput Marcomannos' (in the land of the Marcomanni) under the command (*praepositus*) of Ti. Plautius Ferruntianus most probably refers to the same event of the winter of 179/80 (*CIL* VIII 619 = 11780 = *ILS* 2747). The latter vexillation participated in the battles against the Sarmatians too (cf. *TRH* 232), and later the soldiers were transferred to legio II adiutrix (cf. *CIL* III 10419 = *ILS* 2318, VIII 16553 + p. 2731).

According to its building inscription during the second war the fort of the legio III Italica in Castra Regina (modern Regensburg) in Raetia was built in 179 (*CIL* III 11965). Based on coin evidence and on a fragmentary building inscription in Brigetio (modern Szőny) in Pannonia the legionary fort of the legio I adiutrix was also rebuilt in this period (*RIU* 500). The fort walls and gates of the legionary fort of the legio III Augusta in Lambaesis in Numidia were also rebuilt based on two inscriptions under Marcus Aurelius' reign (but on two different dates because the first mentions only Marcus but in the second one he appears already together with Commodus: *CIL* VIII 2546, 2548).

FURTHER READING

An important summary on the epigraphic culture of antiquity is Millar (1983). The Latin inscriptions of the Roman Empire have been edited in the volumes of *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (*CIL*) of Theodor Mommsen since 1853 and/or the newer ones can be found in the *L'Année épigraphique* (*AE*). The selected inscriptions of emperors Marcus and Lucius were reedited by Dessau in his *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (*ILS*) (353–76). The Greek inscriptions of the period concerning the Romans were edited by R. Cagnat in the *Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes* (*IGR*) and a good selection can be found in Dittenberger's *Sylloge* (*SIG* 858–72). The German translation of the most important ones can be found in Freis ((1984) 181–94, 206–209). The best biographies of Marcus Aurelius, Birley (2001), and of Faustina Minor, Privitzer (2009), also deal with a high number of epigraphic sources (cf. p. 228). The best of chronology and imperial titulature can be found in Kienast ((1996) 137–46) but the most important epigraphic record on the exact chronology are the *Fasti Ostienses* (*Inscr.It.* XIII, 1 = Vidman (1982)). The imperial constitutions

were edited in Oliver's corpus (Oliver (1989) 342–414 nos. 167–204 and Oliver (1970)). The imperial building inscriptions were collected by Horster ((2001) 89, 442). The statue bases of the emperors were collected by Munk Højte ((2001) 509–30 (Lucius Verus 1–139), 531–69 (Marcus Aurelius 1–26), 569–70 (uncertain 1–11), 571 (Avidius Cassius 1), cf. 604–605). The milestones are edited in *CIL* XVII and M. Rathmann dealt with the *miliaria* found in the Latin provinces in Rathmann (2003). The military diplomas are edited in *CIL* XVI and the newer ones in the volumes of the *Roman Military Diplomas* (*RMD*). The personal life and career of senators under the Antonines were studied by Alföldy (1977) and in *Prosopographia Imperii Romani saec. I–III²* (*PIR²*) in detail. All the prosopographical data concerning equestrians were collected in Pflaum (1960–1961) and Devijver (1976–2001) and in *PIR²*. The epigraphic sources of the Marcomannic wars were used in Zwicker (1941) and Kovács (2009).

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PART II

**BIOGRAPHY AND
BACKGROUND**

CHAPTER 6

The Political State of the Roman Empire

Werner Eck

1. The Emperor

On March 7, AD 161, Antoninus Pius died after having been emperor for almost 23 years. When he succeeded Hadrian in June 138, no one had expected him to govern the Roman Empire for such a long time. None of his predecessors had held power for so many years, with the exception of Augustus. And after Pius it was to take another century and a half until, with Constantine (AD 306–37), there once more came an emperor who continuously decided the destiny of the Empire for more than two decades. This period was marked by an extraordinary domestic stability and no danger seemed to threaten at the borders of the Empire either. That is not to say that peace prevailed everywhere. In Britain, Hadrian's Wall was replaced by a new Wall further north, certainly for military reasons; this was clearly the occasion for Pius to take a second imperial acclamation. Disturbances also occurred in the Mauritanian provinces, as a result of which troops even had to be sent from Pannonia to North Africa. Besides this, Achaea is said to have been shaken by disturbances as well. Still, it was not until the very end of his reign that severe tensions with the Arsacid Empire became obvious in the east, which caused Pius to reinforce the eastern army just before his death.

However, taken together, Pius' reign had been a time of calm, peace, and stability, which pretty well matched with the emperor's character; and this impression is intensified even more in retrospect, since the contrast to the time of Marcus Aurelius, in which there was no peace but continuous

warfare, could not have been greater: it was as if a golden era, the *saeculum aureum*, had been replaced by an age of iron. In many respects this corresponds to the historical reality as well.

Initially, Pius' death did not seem to involve any changes for the general situation of the Empire. Pius had himself arranged the succession so unambiguously and farsightedly that the transition was merely a routine. Marcus Aurelius was not only Pius' adopted son, he had, already in the year 145, married his only daughter, Faustina the Younger, which signaled the dynastic continuity. This marriage produced numerous children, which promised to be a guarantee for the safe future of the reign. As early as the year 147, Marcus Aurelius had obtained all the important imperial rights: tribunician power (*tribunicia potestas*) and universal authority (*imperium*) for the administration of the provinces and the armies stationed in them. As long as Pius was alive, Marcus was subordinated to him, not only legally but, as his letters, in which he speaks about his father with the highest reverence, show, morally as well. Pius was for Marcus the standard by which he lived; in the *Meditations* he does not speak about anyone else in so much detail and with so much warmth as about his father. The subordination to Pius' political leadership was a matter of course for Marcus. The moment his father died, he became master of the Empire, without the need for any further legal or political measures, and responsible for its policy in every respect. It is true that the senate conferred further official powers and titles upon him, such as the office of Rome's chief priest, *pontifex maximus*; besides this, the title Father of the Country (*pater patriae*) was also offered to him, as was traditional, but he only accepted it rather late (in the year 166?). Right from the beginning of his reign, he now also bore the name Augustus, which had already become a title. All the same, his actual legal position and his position of power were not essentially changed by any of this.

However, his reign began with a big surprise. Straight after Pius' death, he appointed his younger, adoptive brother Lucius Verus to be his co-emperor, and had all the imperial powers conferred upon him in the same way as they applied to himself. The only exception was the office of *pontifex maximus*, which he retained for himself alone, probably out of respect for the rites of the Roman religion. The numbering of the consulates and of the tribunician power in their titulature made it very clear that there was a difference, at least in seniority, between the two emperors; nevertheless, Verus legally now had the same status as Marcus. In this way, Marcus Aurelius created a double emper- orship, which was against all previous rules (and also practical reasons did not speak in favor of the solution). For even if earlier, e.g. under Vespasian (AD 69–79), whose son Titus had played an important role, similar to that

of Marcus Aurelius himself alongside Pius, expressed in particular in the *tribunicia potestas* that both held, there had still been a distinct legal-political hierarchy between father and son. Marcus, however, obviously thought that he owed it to his adoptive grandfather, the Emperor Hadrian, to take this decision, since Hadrian had initially seen Lucius as the primary successor to Pius. This had become obvious through the fact that at first it was Lucius, not Marcus, who was betrothed to Faustina, Pius' daughter. But Pius had quickly cancelled this arrangement, betrothed, and then duly married Marcus off to his daughter instead. Further, he had conferred the above-mentioned imperial prerogatives only on Marcus, whereas Lucius had to be content with holding the office of consul twice before Pius' death, in the years 154 and 161; Marcus had also been consul before becoming emperor, but in his case three times, the first two as early as 140 and 145, and lastly, together with Lucius, in 161. Thus the distance between them was more than clearly marked. But Marcus wanted to compensate a little for the way in which Pius had downgraded the younger adoptive son, and thus to fulfill Hadrian's wish at least partially – and it was a clear expression of Marcus' inner sense of what was right. The betrothal of Lucius Verus to Lucilla, Marcus Aurelius' daughter, was also intended to demonstrate that Verus had equal status; and thereby a particularly close bond with the older emperor was created, as well. Of course, a son-in-law also had obligations towards his father-in-law.

From Marcus' side, the appointment of his adoptive brother as an Augustus had probably happened without any reservations, at least in the beginning. That, later on, Verus in practice rather took second place behind Marcus, that Marcus was seen as the real emperor, probably does not have only to do with the early death of the co-ruler in spring 169, but more likely with his character: Verus primarily saw the possibilities of his position for his own person, but was less interested in fulfilling his duties towards Rome than was Marcus. This quickly became apparent to everyone, so that it was not surprising, when, also during Verus' lifetime, Marcus seemed to be the real, indeed the only, political center.

2. The Senate as the Associate of the Emperor

Marcus came from a family which had belonged to the senate for several generations, i.e. to the council that was, according to republican tradition, the key center of Roman politics. Since the establishment of the monarchy under Augustus (27 BC – AD 14), its power had been reduced, but at least officially the senate was, along with the Roman People (*Senatus Populusque Romanus*), the sovereign body which conferred the appropriate powers upon

every emperor (legally in conjunction with the People's Assembly), at least formally. Depending on the kind of relationship the emperor had with the senate, the reign during the lifetime of the particular emperor was either tension-free or was seen as a form of tyranny. This was apparent above all in the verdict of history and characterized the posthumous reputation of the particular ruler. Ever since Domitian's death in the year 96 and as a result of the so-called adoptive emperorship, an ideological consensus between the senate and the emperor had been established, to which each of Marcus Aurelius' predecessors felt obliged. According to this concept, what the senate sought was that it should not be birth in the imperial family which would decide who was made the emperor, but the choice of the best man, which naturally meant one from their ranks. That the decision was not made by the senate, but by the ruler himself, did not matter – because formally the imperial powers were still delegated by the senate, hence it was seen as an election by the senate. Because of the favorable circumstance that none of the emperors up to Marcus had a natural son, the election of each successor could be presented as the fulfillment of the ideological concept of the election of the best man, to which the senate gave its blessing. So, the emperor could be seen as a partner of the senate who, moreover, committed himself not to have anyone from the senate executed. Almost all emperors since Trajan practically abode by this political taboo; the fact that at the beginning of Hadrian's reign some senators had been put to death on the orders of one of his praetorian prefects, for alleged conspiracy, had caused him problems in some circles of the senate until the end of his life. A key feature of the concept of cooperation between emperor and senate was that the emperor treated this body with respect, and that he behaved towards the senators as if they were on the same level as him. This was a simple matter, but nonetheless it had a direct impact on everyone. As Pliny the Younger, a senator under Trajan (AD 98–117), had expressed it, the essential convention was that the emperor behaves like one of us ('*unus ex nobis*'; Pliny, *Panegyric* 63.2). That this attitude, which conveyed the impression of equality, could not be enforced by the senate was clear to everyone; it depended entirely on the decision of the particular emperor.

Since Trajan all emperors had been members of the senate for a long time before their accession, so they had become acquainted with the other side of the relationship themselves. None more so than Pius, who had belonged to the senate for almost 30 years by the time Hadrian died. Probably also because of having been profoundly imbued with the senatorial ethos, his relationship to his former peers in the senate had been almost completely free of tension, without him losing his independence. In contrast to his father, Marcus never got to know the senate as an ordinary member, for he had always been the son of the ruler, who would eventually succeed him. Still,

Marcus never stressed his superior position over the senate through actions which could have disrupted or even destroyed the fair appearance of cooperation between equals. For years, he had learned from his father how to behave towards the senate, both as a body and with individual senators. The fact that some of his teachers, such as Cornelius Fronto (consul in 142) or Herodes Atticus (consul in 143), whom Marcus greatly admired, belonged to the senate, also contributed to a tension-free interaction. The private friendly contact of the younger man with those men who had reached the peak of their chosen profession, oratory, and were at the same time prestigious members of the senate, led, in combination with his philosophical ideals and the model of his father, to a relaxed relationship with the senate in its entirety. Marcus naturally involved the senate in his political decisions, even if this did not mean in any way that decisions had really been made there. However, the senate had been the place where some imperial decisions were announced. At least for some issues, like negotiations with peoples outside the Empire or peace settlements, this was so common, that it was particularly noticed if it did not happen on occasion. This was the case in the year 175, when Avidius Cassius had himself declared emperor in the east, which forced Marcus to come to a fast peace settlement with the Jazyges; in this tense situation, contrary to his usual practice, Marcus forgot to inform the senate about the conditions of this agreement (Dio 72.17). Normally, however, Marcus conveyed his decisions to the senate and let it decide formally, even if he was not residing in Rome, but, as it was necessary for many years, on the Danube. How meaningless these 'senate decisions' were sometimes, can be seen especially clearly through the fact that the senate was even able to vote on more than one request at a time, yet without even formally rephrasing the imperial request into its own resolution, a *senatus consultum*, as would have been necessary. The wording of the imperial request then became the senate decision. Thus Marcus wrote to the city of Miletus in answer to their petition to change a competition in their town into a specifically privileged *Agon* in honor of the young Commodus, Marcus Aurelius' son, that he could only send them the excerpt of his address, in which he had delivered the request to the senate. The senate had not made a decision of its own, but simply agreed to all of his requests at once (*AE* (1977) 801 = (1989) 683). That this had happened merely by acclamation, i.e. without there even being any further discussion, is not surprising. Still, no complaints are known from any senatorial representatives that the emperor did not respect the senate or treat it with the importance it deserved. For the way in which the emperor behaved towards the high council was consummately respectful; the political tone was decisive. Marcus Aurelius paid attention to this with extreme care. So the senate could yield up its own power without loss of face.

3. The Change in the Composition of the Senate

All of this had also been easier because not only had the senators, after almost two centuries of *de facto* monarchy, long since accepted the dominant role of the emperor, but, in addition to that, the senate had gone through a profound change in its composition during this period. Under Augustus, many of the senators still came from Rome or its immediate surroundings and, moreover, from families whose political tradition often reached far back into the Republic. Naturally enough, this involved certain perceptions about the importance of their own position. During the Republic, the senate had been the political center and the senators were masters of the world. But by the time that Marcus became emperor, almost half of the senators had already come from the provinces, from the territory of the former subdued peoples. In a slow process, more and more people whose home countries were outside of Italy gained access to the senate. At the beginning, they mostly came from the Latin-speaking provinces in the Iberian Peninsula and the south of France, which had long been very strongly influenced by Rome and Italy, economically, culturally, and linguistically. It had been above all in the Neronian-Flavian period that a great number of new men were enrolled into the senate. Among these were, for instance, the families of the future emperors Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius, and also the ancestors of Marcus himself. His grandfather Annius Verus obtained the consulship for the first time in the year 97, so he had already belonged to the senatorial order since the time of Vespasian. But the first senators from the African region also appeared at this time, and in the first half of the second century they formed quite an important group. Cornelius Fronto, one of Marcus' rhetoric teachers, is the most famous personality among them; he came from Cirta in the later province of Numidia. Probably even more important for the historical development was, however, the influx of senators whose homes were the eastern provinces, above all those of pronounced Greek culture. The first representatives from the east of the Empire were, in the majority of cases, still descendants of Italian emigrants, some of them also came from Roman colonies, which lay in these provinces. But already under Vespasian descendants of great Greek families, as well as of Hellenistic dynasties or Galatian kings, can be found alongside them. Even though these newcomers from the east had to assimilate to the Roman-Latin norms in many respects, they still brought their own cultural experiences with them to Rome, including in literature and philosophy. In this way, the senate was a conglomerate of people with different characters, whose intellectual basis was nonetheless Greco-Roman. They all owed their privileged position within the Empire to the emperor, either directly or through an ancestor who had been the first in their family to rise to senatorial rank. This influence of the

emperor on the composition of the senate intensified under Marcus Aurelius with particular rapidity, especially when the numerous wars as well as the impact of the Empire-wide plague carried off many senators from AD 165 onwards: replacements for them had to be found. Furthermore, not all of the peers in the senate were well suited (some were maybe even unwilling) for major army commands. So the direct enrollment of experienced members of the equestrian order into the senate was intensified: these men did not have to pass through the usual slow senatorial career, during which they would have become imbued with the specifically senatorial ethos. Instead, they were enrolled directly from a military or administrative position into the higher ranks of the senate. Hence they only acquired an insight into its norms quite late on and indeed very infrequently, because they were deployed for tasks in the provinces and the army on a large scale. One of those new senators was Helvius Pertinax, who even became emperor for a few months in the year 193. He was only the son of a freedman, but Marcus had adlected him to the senate because of his military merits. When he was promoted to a consulship in the year 175, dissent could be noticed in some of the established families because of his ancestry, but the emperor, nevertheless, did not give in to this (Dio 72.22). People like Pertinax, more than was the case with senators from older senatorial families, felt that they owed their entire position to the emperor, without whom they would not have reached these heights. This dependence was their basis of life, so it is hardly surprising that they almost exclusively believed in cooperation with the emperor. However, even they were so deeply integrated into the senatorial code of behavior that the expectations of the senate as a whole were not essentially changed by their membership. They too expected the emperor to affirm his cooperation with the senate openly, even though he was not actually required to do so, as far as his powers were concerned. The relationship between emperor and senate existed in a constant state of tension between what the emperor should be, according to the majority of the senators, and what he could be or was: either *princeps* (the first [among peers]) or *dominus* (master). It was self-evident for Marcus Aurelius that he should only be *princeps*, yet all the senators also saw him as their master – precisely because this was not a requirement.

4. Senators and Equestrians as Partners in the Emperor's Policy-Making

Over and above the senate's actual loss of power, which everyone knew about, but which everyone accepted as well, it should certainly not be forgotten that senators as individuals occupied many positions in the Roman Empire, not least

the most powerful ones. All of the great military provinces, such as Britannia, the two Germanic provinces on the Rhine, Pannonia superior and inferior as well as Moesia superior and inferior on the Danube, and, further, Cappadocia, Syria, and Syria Palaestina in the east, were entrusted to them. They also played a vital role among the advisers of the emperor. Many senators still took an outstanding part in political, military, and administrative life at various levels.

Besides this, however, from Augustus onwards and at an enhanced rate since Flavian times, members of the Roman equestrian order (*equester ordo*) had also occupied important positions in the emperor's entourage or in immediate proximity to him, in Rome as well as in the provinces. The two Praetorian prefects, who did not only command the cohorts based in Rome, but were also involved in most of the general political decisions and which were present when the emperor acted as a judge, had an outstanding role. In addition to the military power that was under their control, their influence mostly resulted from their perpetual presence in the close proximity of the emperor, in which they could participate in many sectors beyond their official duties. This applied to several other equestrian office-holders as well, who were constantly in contact with the ruler. Such were the man responsible for the food supply of the city of Rome (*praefectus annonae*), the commander of the seven cohorts that formed a fire brigade for the capital (*praefectus vigilum*), the heads of the great imperial offices for Latin and Greek correspondence (*ab epistulis Latinis*, *ab epistulis Graecis*) and of two further bureaus, one that prepared replies to petitions from the inhabitants of the Empire (*a libellis*), the other that prepared judicial hearings of the emperor (*a cognitionibus*). Finally, one must mention the head of the financial administration (*a rationibus*), who was clearly the man to deal with all matters concerning earnings and expenses from all over the Empire. How important these positions were, can be seen from the fact that many of these functionaries who were not directly entrusted with duties specifically related to the city of Rome (such as the *praefecti annonae* and *vigilum*), accompanied the emperor on his journeys; for they could only act in association with him, because they were not independent 'ministers' who led their departments on their own responsibility. Their suggestions or written drafts became operative and could be sent to the addressees solely after the emperor's approval. The center of the Empire was wherever the emperor was: that was where decisions were made, no matter whether they concerned the declaration of war, peace negotiations with tribes outside the borders of the empire, the authorization of an *Agon* in a city like Miletus, the permission for the construction of a temple to worship the emperor, or the conferment of Roman citizenship upon a tribal chieftain of the Zegrenses in Mauritania. In the many years that Marcus resided at Carnuntum or elsewhere in the Danube provinces, because of the wars against the Germanic tribes, the camp was quite naturally the place where the policies of the Empire were carried out

(Dio 72.11). Since the emperor resided there, decisions were made there, for nothing could be decided without him, at least in the case of personalities like Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius, who considered their emperorship a serious task. This was partially different in the case of Marcus' son Commodus, who frequently let others decide.

However, although the ruler was certainly the one who took the final decisions, he never did this alone. Marcus always involved a *consilium*, i.e. a group of advisors. When he decided about the conferment of the citizenship upon the tribal chieftain of the Zegrenses, 12 high-ranking members, some of them senators, some equestrian office-holders, were with the emperor. *Cum consilio conlocutus* – after he had consulted with the members of his council: that was proper practice. For even an emperor was not infallible, he relied on the advice and the knowledge of others. Marcus had no inhibitions about receiving this kind of help with his duties.

5. The Provinces and the Army as Centers of Power

Around the emperor was the actual power center of the Empire, but it was not the only one, for, even if not legally, *de facto* there existed other political centers beside it: these were all those provinces, in which a strong Roman army was stationed under a senatorial governor, as well as Egypt, because of its enormous economic resources. The monarchic rule of the Roman Empire arose, among other things, from the problems caused by the army in the late Republic; and the stability of every emperor's rule was based on the loyalty of the army. Loss of the army's confidence could be fatal for the ruler; this became more than clear at the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty in the year 68, with the fall of Nero. But besides their function as guarantor of the monarchical regime, the provincial armies had to be permanently available for the protection of the Empire. Their undisputed leader was the emperor, to whom the troops swore the oath of allegiance, which was annually renewed.

There certainly were army units in every province, but the majority of the army was stationed in the frontier provinces, which separated the Roman world from the world of the barbarians: in Britannia, in the two Germanic provinces, in Pannonia superior, and the two Moesian provinces, in Cappadocia, Syria, and Syria Palestine (the former Judaea). There were always at least two legions, in some even three, along with a variable number of auxiliary mounted units (*alae*) and infantry (*cohortes*). In a few provinces, like Pannonia inferior, in Dacia, as well as in Arabia and 'Numidia' there was only one legion with the corresponding auxiliaries; under Marcus, one legion each was also stationed in

Noricum (Austria) and Raetia (Bavaria). In the so-called pacified provinces, such as Asia, Africa, Achaia or Sicilia, and Cyprus the garrison consisted of only one auxiliary unit in most cases. At the beginning of Marcus Aurelius' reign, the Roman army, including the praetorian cohorts and the two fleets in Misenum and Ravenna, altogether totaled not fewer than 420 000 men. Of these, the legions were recruited from Roman citizens, whereas it was mainly non-Romans, so-called peregrines that served in the auxiliaries. The 30 legions nominally comprised about 180 000 men; the stock of auxiliaries cannot be calculated that precisely, but along with the members of the fleets, who were also recruited from the peregrine population, they certainly exceeded the number of 200 000 men. Senators that acted as governors of the provinces, almost exclusively had the supreme command over these troops, above all of the legions; only a single legion was under the control of the Egyptian prefect, an equestrian. The individual legions were also commanded by senatorial legionary legates, who for their part were subordinate to the governor. In addition, there were six military tribunes for each legion: they were not in direct command of subdivisions, but, like governors and legionary commanders, they obtained their position in the army through their social status; one of them was of senatorial, the other five of equestrian rank. It was not their military experience and qualifications, but primarily their descent that determined their appointment as officers. Among the tribunes, there was the difference that the five equestrians had already commanded an auxiliary cohort beforehand and they frequently assumed responsibility for further executive functions within the army afterwards as well. Due to their usually long service in the army, they accumulated far greater experience, so it is not surprising that Marcus employed these experienced equestrian military officers for specific functions in the difficult time of the Danubian wars, where they had to fight against many Germanic tribes. Equally, it is no wonder that he promoted more than a few of them into the senate, so that, by means of their concrete experience, they were also able to command legionary formations, functions that traditionally could only be conferred upon members of the senate. The circumstances required new political decisions, without having to make fundamental changes in the existing.

The army, as the foundation of the imperial power, had to be treated wisely, and at all levels. However, it is striking that, despite the numerous wars and frequent victories, none of the senatorial commanders was awarded triumphal ornaments (*ornamenta triumphalia*) any more, as had been usual up to Hadrian's day in the case of a victory worthy of a triumph. To be sure, Marcus had honorific statues set up in the Forum of Trajan at Rome for well-deserving senators, but he did not revive the supreme military distinction. He also adhered to the restrictions his father had laid down for rewarding auxiliary soldiers. Up to the beginning of Pius' reign, all auxiliary soldiers had not only

had Roman citizenship conferred on them personally at their discharge, but also on any children that they had conceived during their term of service, even though they were not allowed to marry legally as long as they were in the service. From the end of the year 140, Pius had restricted this privilege to the veterans themselves; thereafter only children that were born before the entry into the army were included in the privilege. That was a huge backwards step, but Marcus did not change it. All the same, he maintained the conferment of the citizenship on discharged auxiliary soldiers. Admittedly, one could doubt this, because between the years 167 and 176/77 there are no documents to testify to this, whereas both before this date and after it they are very numerous. But the explanation for the absence of this evidence is rather that there was a shortage of the raw material because of the wars, for the documents were written on bronze tablets. Presumably during those years the documentation was recorded on non-durable writing materials. At all events, it would have been problematic to displease the soldiers unnecessarily in such a militarily tense period by withdrawing this privilege. In this case, Marcus adhered to his father's standards, just like in the case of the awarding of the *ornamenta triumphalia*, which Pius had already abandoned as well. Certainly, there would have been far more pressing military occasions for Marcus to revive this much-valued award and therefore honor his high military commanders in this fashion; but he stuck to the decisions that were made earlier.

6. The Development of the Law

The emperor was the center of the entire policy-making of the Empire. This did not only apply to concrete decisions of a political-administrative character, but also to all those which altered existing laws or introduced new principles of law. The jurist Gaius, who wrote his work *Institutiones* (Introduction into the Roman Law) under Antoninus Pius, cited the following sources as a basis for the Roman law (Gaius 1.2): laws, plebiscites, decrees of the senate, imperial constitutions, edicts and opinions of legal scholars (*leges, plebiscita, senatus consulta, constitutiones principum, edicta, responsae prudentium*). Of these, however, from the early imperial period onwards what was relevant were, increasingly, only decrees of the senate, which, as Gaius says, have the force of law, and, above all, the ordinances of the emperor, which could be issued in various ways, through decrees, edicts or letters (Gaius 1.5). The only difference between decrees of the senate and imperial constitutions was simply that the former were always either introduced by the *princeps* himself or at any rate enacted with his consent. Not only was the aforementioned decree of the senate for Miletus made as the result of an imperial speech (*oratio principis*), which was read out in the senate by one of the two imperial quaestors.

Likewise, a resolution about the maximum price of gladiators, passed between 177 and 180, goes back to an oral imperial request to the senate, which was reformulated into a *senatus consultum* by a senator. That both the *oratio* of the emperor and the decree of the senate had the same legal force is apparent from the fact that at Sardeis in the province Asia, they published Marcus' speech, while at Italica in the province Baetica it was the *senatus consultum*, which had an identical content, that was promulgated (*ILS* 9340, 5163). In the case of other decrees of the senate, one also has to presume that, at least on important matters, an arrangement with the emperor had been made; this, for instance, applies to the *senatus consultum Orfitianum*, named after Ser. Cornelius Scipio Salvidienus Orfitus, one of the consuls of the year 178; as a result of this resolution, priority was given to her children in inheriting the property of a deceased woman, while previously the relatives from a woman's family were privileged. This was an important step to enhance women as legal persons, which was hardly likely to have happened without Marcus Aurelius' approval. Imperial constitutions, however, were issued without this feedback to the senate. Decrees were usually the consequence of judicial hearings, which, when they drafted general principles of law, could be used in other cases as well, in fact everywhere in the Empire. The same applies to edicts, even if they were drafted as conclusions to specific problems that were reported to the emperor. The majority of imperial decisions, which could become a source of law, were nevertheless taken otherwise. It was not unusual for higher officials to address the emperor by letter, when they could not solve a problem in their sphere of authority themselves – or when they could not summon up the courage to do so on their own responsibility. This happened, for instance, when two governors of the province Mauritania Tingitana turned respectively to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus and to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, on issues concerning the Roman citizenship of a tribal chieftain in their province: on both occasions the emperors replied with their decision to the governor (*AE* (1971) 534). Even more numerous, certainly, were the enquiries of communities and private individuals that wanted to achieve an imperial decision. The communities and some high-ranking private individuals received a letter, an *epistula*, with formal salutation and imperial greetings at the end. This reflected the courteous personal contact with the communities as constitutive parts of the Empire and with the elite of these cities. Yet, many other petitioners had to be content with an answer that was written at the bottom of their submission and then displayed publicly at the place where the emperor had given the answer (so called rescripts). Thereupon, the petitioners could make a copy, with which they could operate at home. However, in general both communities and private individuals had to hand in their petitions to the emperor directly, either in person or through intermediaries. To be sure, Pius had tried to establish a more rational system by having the

governors collect such written requests to the emperor and dispatch them all at once; the emperor would then send his answers back in the same way. But this had achieved only very limited success. The majority of requests to the emperor were made by delegations of the communities, by the petitioners themselves or by middlemen, who had access to the emperor in some way. Whatever was decided through this process could be used as a precedent in other contexts by others as well. Every imperial word could obtain the 'force of law'. The *Codex Iuris civilis* of the Emperor Justinian (a systematic collection of the emperors' legal decisions) contains thousands of such 'laws', with more than a few from Marcus Aurelius in particular. Indeed, from the time of Marcus Aurelius onwards there was a significant increase in the number of these imperial responses that have been transmitted.

7. Roman Citizenship and Citizenship of Other Communities in the Empire

The Empire was a political unit, which was ruled by one emperor or by two as was the case under Marcus, who had Verus and later his son Commodus as Augustus as his colleagues. All the same, the Empire was not a uniformly shaped legal unit. This became mostly apparent in the law of persons. For the majority of the freeborn or free residents of the Empire were not citizens of Rome, did not belong to the *populus Romanus*, to the Roman people. They were citizens of their political units, which we customarily call cities, or which we should probably call local self-government units, to be more precise. This belonging to a community was determined by descent from parents who were citizens of a community or maybe also by manumission through a citizen of the community. Only in Italy all those units were communities of Roman law, whose freeborn residents all possessed the Roman citizenship. And the majority of freedmen in Italy were probably Roman citizens as well. In the provinces, on the other hand, all residents had initially been subjects of the *populus Romanus*, and only possessed their local citizenship, thus being foreigners in their relationship to Rome, i.e. *peregrini*. However, Rome had started early on to confer the Roman citizenship on peregrines as well, who nonetheless, still remained citizens of their city. Mention has already been made of the rewards made to auxiliaries, who obtained Roman citizenship after completing their term of service. Furthermore, many members of the local ruling class were awarded Roman citizenship, for various reasons. Marcus and Commodus also gave the above-mentioned prince of the Zegrenses and his family this particular right, because of his outstanding position within his tribe and his loyalty towards Rome; the loyalty became apparent in the situation when other Berber

tribes in Mauritania had threatened not only the Mauritanian provinces, but also the province of Baetica in Southern Spain (*AE* (1971) 534). Also, with the so-called Latin right, a kind of preliminary stage on the way to Roman citizenship was created. This corresponded to a great extent to the Roman rules in its formal regulations and civil rights; politically, however, it was inferior in status to full Roman citizenship, to which, however, above all the leading families in such communities could in due course fairly easily ascend. In this way, Roman citizenship became a status which was independent of the individual communities; it became a kind of citizenship of the Empire, to which peregrines could be admitted. Up to the time of Marcus Aurelius, this had already happened to a large extent, mostly in the ruling class of the individual cities, but on a big scale also through the army for people of a modest social background. By this means, the political differences between Rome and Italy as the heartland of the Roman citizens on the one hand and the provinces on the other were gradually reduced and political integration was promoted. Marcus Aurelius himself, whose family had come from the province Baetica, as well as numerous senators and knights from provincial, and, especially, in the east, above all from peregrine cities, clearly demonstrate this political integration. As emperor he had also contributed to this integration by grants of citizenship; quite a few persons called Aurelius owed the citizenship to him. It is true that this can hardly be verified in detail, because as a result of the empire-wide general grant of Roman citizenship by Caracalla, in the year 212 or 213, the family name Aurelius had been adopted on a mass scale. Nevertheless, Marcus did not act any differently from his predecessors; the grant of the status of a Roman citizen was intended to increase the loyalty of former peregrines towards the Empire dramatically, thereby strengthen the Empire and merge it into a political unity. Marcus Aurelius played a part in this process.

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CHAPTER 7

Cultural and Intellectual Background and Development

Leofranc Holford-Strevens

1. Oratory: The Second Sophistic

Ancient theory divided oratory into three main kinds: deliberative, arguing for or against a measure or a policy before a decision-taking body; forensic, arguing a case in court; and epideictic, showing off the orator's skill. This last had always been practiced on ceremonial occasions, and in rhetorical schools once they had emerged; but in imperial times the school exercise, called in Latin *declamatio* and in Greek *melētē* (literally 'practice'), was transformed into a public and professional performance, in which the orator, no longer a student and quite probably a teacher, displayed his prowess, being judged not only on his fluency, his knowledge of history, and his skill at inventing arguments and constructing speeches, but also, from the late first century onwards, on his mastery of classical Attic. Orators would often invite the audience to nominate the subject on which they were to declaim extempore, using their stock of arguments and stylistic tropes and drawing on their accumulated skills rather like a musician asked to improvise upon a tune. Solid performance required constant study; even the great Herodes Atticus fell short of his usual standard when, as he told Galen, he had been too busy in the previous three days to read or write anything.¹

Declamations fall into two broad types, being either on a general question (called in Greek a *thésis*) or a specific case (*hupóthesis*); the latter is divided into two subtypes known by their Latin names of *suasoria*, in which the speaker gives advice in a historical situation, and *controversia*, in which he argues one side of a legal dispute. Whereas for Romans the *suasoria* was deemed less

important than the *controversia*, which trained speakers for the law-courts by presenting a supposed law and a set of facts that tested its limits (for instance: 'If a man makes an unmarried woman pregnant, she has the choice of marrying him or having him put to death. A man has made two women pregnant: one wishes to marry him, the other demands his execution'), among Greeks the *suasoria* stood in high honor and the *controversia* too might relate to the past, but in both types the past must be mythological or classical, ending with Alexander (Russell (1983) 106–107).

Such display oratory, already on the rise since the late first century, flourished in the second; in the early third Philostratus designated its Greek practitioners 'sophists' – a term that before him, when not used of a superior rhetoric teacher, had still tended to be derogatory – and the movement the Second Sophistic as being a revival of the intellectual revolution that took place in the late fifth century BC. The last exponent of the First Sophistic was (we are told) Isocrates, the first of the second Aeschines, who after his Athenian career had been ended in 330 BC by Demosthenes' speech *On the Crown* had set up a school for rhetoric on Rhodes; Philostratus skips rapidly past four centuries to Nicetes of Smyrna, as if no intervening orator deserved consideration. Historically all this is hard to justify (Anderson (1995) 18–19), but the term remains a useful label for Greek rhetorical culture in the second century. In the Roman world, some of Fronto's epideictic works survive; Apuleius of Madaura was certainly a show-orator; in the next generation the Christian ex-barrister Tertullian displays the hallmarks of the sophistic style, above all in the bravura perversity of *De Pallio* ('On the Philosopher's Cloak').²

German scholarship has termed these sophists *Konzertredner*, 'concert orators', for they enjoyed the prestige, and displayed the temperament, of famous singers in our own day. Philostratus' collection of their biographies is as full of their quarrels and displays of arrogance as of their professional achievements and of the honors and public functions that these brought them. To be sure, many owed their position in part to the wealth that had made their education possible and to connections inherited without regard to oratory: obvious cases are M. Antonius Polemo, the descendant of Roman client kings, and his admirer the plutocrat Herodes Atticus, who when flatteringly called one of the classic Ten Orators replied, 'Well, I'm better than Andocides' (Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 2.1.14).

Two speeches by Polemo have survived, arguing both sides of a *controversia* on the theme:

It being the rule at Athens that the father of the man who died most bravely in war should deliver the funeral speech [for the fallen], the fathers of Callimachus and Cynegirus go to law.³

The Attic is faulty; the reader reflecting in the study, unseduced by the theatricality and showmanship of their performance, is likelier to find language and thought over-strained than to share the young Marcus' assessment of Polemo as a hardworking farmer who cultivates only for profit and not pleasure (Fronto, *Epistulae ad Marcem Caesarem et invicem* 2.10.1). No speeches survive by Herodes, reputedly the greatest of the sophists, unless we believe in the mediocre effort ascribed to him under the title *Perì politeías* ('On the State'), in fact a *suasoria* set in Thessaly near the end of the fifth century BC and conjecturally attributed on that account to Hippodromus of Larisa (Russell (1983) 111). Far superior are the numerous preserved speeches by Aelius Aristides and by Lucian of Samosata.

Aristides was a perfectionist who did not perform extempore and did not indulge in flashy tricks of style. His numerous and lengthy productions, which give ample evidence of his erudition as well as of his stylistic mastery, include defenses of oratory against philosophical attack and of the four Athenian statesmen whom Plato had disparaged; historical *suasoriae*; and encomia to Athens and other cities about their respective glories, one being a speech before Antoninus Pius at Rome telling the Romans everything they liked to hear about the benefits of imperial rule. There are also *Sacred Tales* in which he details the symptoms of his illnesses and the supposedly curative dreams he received while incubating in Asclepius' temples, which included prescriptions of bare feet and cold baths at the height of winter; addresses to Zeus, Athena, and other deities, notably Sarapis and Asclepius, whom he credited with curing him from bouts of sickness (sickness whose benefits, he says elsewhere, he would not exchange even for all that is called happiness amongst mankind); a letter to Marcus and Commodus about the devastation wrought on Smyrna in 178; a 'monody' (in prose) on the same subject; and a 'palinode' celebrating the imperial rebuilding of the city. He normally proceeds in long rolling periods, though when extreme emotion is called for, as in the letter and monody, he breaks into short single-clause sentences full of pathos. In Byzantine times he passed for a model of composition, rather as in Latin some humanists did until the 19th century.

Lucian, whom Philostratus does not deign to notice but who since the Renaissance has been enjoyed by far more readers than Aristides, is a satirist who spares neither human beings nor the gods. As a commentator on society, he presents lurid portraits of the Greek intellectual as the rich Roman's tame client; the grammarian who cannot recognize solecisms; the pretentious historians of Verus' Parthian War; Peregrinus Proteus, the ex-Christian Cynic who staged his death by leaping into a pyre at the Olympic Games of 165; and Alexander of Abonouteichos, the healer with a snake-god called Glycon ('Sweet One') who caused his home town ('Abonus' Wall') to be renamed Ionopolis ('Ionian City'). Ancient invective is not known for

scrupulous adherence to the truth, but coins ‘of the Ionopolitans’ were struck under Marcus and Verus.⁴ Nor do philosophers escape Lucian’s attention: some are admired, but others mocked.

The tensions between oratory and philosophy that these authors illustrate were real,⁵ but not the whole story. Many persons practiced both, as in the previous generation Dio Chrysostom had done, but also Plutarch, failure though he was as a sophist (Russell (1973) 6–7). The prime example is Dio’s pupil and Plutarch’s friend Favorinus, a philosopher in his own eyes, a sophist in others’; he engaged in a typical sophists’ feud with Polemo, in which personal enmity was reinforced by rivalry between their supporting cities Ephesus and Smyrna, and delivered purely sophistic speeches, alongside numerous others treating philosophical matter in a sophistic manner, yet also wrote serious treatises, which Galen paid the honor of a reply.

Besides speeches, sophists also produced fictitious letters, such as those of fishermen, farmers, parasites, and courtesans composed by Alciphron. Most of these persons are of course imaginary, with names invented in accordance with their profession, but some are characters from Menander, one of whom, Glycera (‘Sweetie’), is made the mistress of the poet himself. Other collections were fathered on historical persons such as Themistocles; in Latin Julius Titianus wrote letters of famous women in a Ciceronian manner that attracted mockery; a Greek epistolary novel has for hero Plato’s pupil the tyrannicide Chion of Heraclea, although some scholars put the work in the fourth century AD. However, the most famous example is the purported correspondence of Phalaris, the proverbially odious tyrant of Akragas (Agrigento) in the sixth century BC, for whom Lucian also composed a self-defense and a speech in his support. These are specimens of the paradoxical praises of ‘things without honor’ in which sophists liked to indulge; Lucian also wrote in praise of a fly, Dio of hair, a gnat, and a parrot (this last also celebrated in Latin by Apuleius), Favorinus of Thersites and the quartan fever.

Since sophists taught rhetoric as well as practicing it, some of them wrote treatises on the subject, others such as Aristides are credited with treatises they did not write. A fourth-century author declared that

in the heyday of the Roman Empire, when wise policy ruled the cities, in the time of Hadrian and Antoninus, rhetorical and philosophical emperors, the writing of rhetorical treatises became intense. (Sopater, *Commentary on Hermogenes’ Art* 5.8)

He names as authors Lollianus of Ephesus, the first holder of the Athenian civic chair in rhetoric (Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 1.21.1), one Hermagoras, not to be confused with his earlier two namesakes, and Hermogenes of Tarsus, who greatly impressed Marcus, above all with his improvised

performances, but whose career was blasted by illness (*ibid.* 2.7). Of the first two only a few fragments survive, but the latter's writings, augmented by other works that he did not write, became standard classics for later writers to comment on.

2. The Cult of the Past: Atticism and Archaism

The Second Sophistic's emphasis was characteristic of second-century culture, in which both Latin- and Greek-speakers were in different ways reviving the past: the former, turning their backs on the literature of the preceding generations, were cultivating that of the Republic before Augustus or even Cicero; the latter, whose culture was in fact far more vibrant, and who were enjoying a marked revival in material prosperity, revived local scripts and dialects even as they erected grand new buildings, and in their oratory imagined themselves back in the past of free cities ruled by neither kings nor emperors, even if their own cities had not yet been founded at that time. Not only did they, amongst themselves, pay as little heed as possible to Rome the conqueror city, as opposed to the universal *basileús* ('king', the usual term for the emperor) and the empire that he ruled and many of them served, but they did their best to abolish the memory of historical events, and even more of literature, between the death of Alexander and their own day; even Pausanias' travel-guide to Greece, which does not eschew details of Hellenistic history, concentrates on the artistic monuments erected before 'the disaster of Chaeronea' – Philip II's victory over Athens and Thebes in 338 BC – and makes very little reference to Hellenistic writers (Hose (2007) 339–40). The favored pose was that of the classical Athenian.

This obsession with a single city's ancient glories at once created a cultural space in which a convenient but unheroic subjection could be forgotten (Bowie (1974)) and conferred an air of universality on a socially divisive education (Schmitz (1997) 31); but an internal dynamic was also at work. The Greek reaction in the first century BC against the floridity of recent rhetoric, damned as 'Asian', in the name of the style practiced by the great Attic orators mutated into attempts at restoring the Attic dialect in place of the mixed language that we call the Koine.⁶ It is Atticism in this sense that became the mark of education, though it was pursued with different degrees of success and intensity by different authors and in different genres; technical writers were largely exempt, and historians and philosophers were under less pressure than public speakers, whose rivals were happy to pounce on words that were not good Attic.⁷ One orator, Philagrus by name, when challenged to say in what reputable author a word he had used in anger could be found, replied 'In Philagrus' (Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 2.8.1); at the imaginary

banquet of Athenaeus' *Deiopnosophists* (written circa 200) one character is nicknamed *Keitoúkeitos* from *keítai ou keítai*, 'Is it found [in a good author] or not?' Atticism of style was far less important: sophists flaunt short phrases with an abundance of the striking rhymes and rhythms that had been condemned in the anti-Asian reaction; the slogans of that age are no longer heard, though Philostratus says of the Andrian Onomarchus that, 'living near Asia, he contracted the Ionian style, which was especially cultivated in Ephesus, like eye-disease' (*Lives of the Sophists* 2.18.1).

Not all practitioners of Atticism were equal to the task: the author of *Peri politeías* not only commits sundry errors (Schmid (1887) 195–200) but even admits the Latinisms *politikòs pólemos* 'civil war' (*bellum civile*; the correct epithet is *oikêios*) and *suntithénai* 'to compare' (*componere*) for (e.g.) *parabállein*; then, towards the end, he suddenly remembers that the earlier Attic writers sometimes expressed 'to fear' by the verb *orrōdeîn*, and promptly works it in four times. By contrast, Aelius Aristides, when he chose, could pass, with minor lapses, for an author of the fourth century BC, above all by his careful exclusion of inappropriate diction (Schmid (1887) ii *passim*; Boulanger (1923) 395–412). Lucian, whose mother tongue may not have been Greek, tries his hardest and has won much praise; it is not hard to find faults, along with excessive use of certain pet expressions, yet he is confident enough of his prowess to show no mercy in mocking persons with a command of Attic inferior to his own. Other people are content to use *tt* in words such as *thálatta* ('sea') where the Koine had *ss*, to write *gígnesthai* for 'to become' and *gignóskein* for 'to recognize' instead of *gin-*, or to work in the special dual forms for two things or persons that had been in everyday use amongst fifth-century-BC Athenians but were long since obsolete. However, while individual authors vary in their practice, it is no longer possible to date a text purely on its style; in consequence, some works currently assigned to our period may in fact be usurping the place of others that are not.

Consistency is not always to be expected, either in theory or in practice: Galen, formidable polemicist that he is, can fault Favorinus for using, in an attack on Stoic epistemology, the Stoic term *katalēptón*, 'perceivable', which was post-classical, instead of the Platonic *bebaiōs gnōstón*, 'firmly knowable' (*On the Best Education* 1.2–3), but also round on 'the practitioners of the accursed sham education' (*hoi tēn katátripton pseudopaidéian askoûntes*) who wish him to call the cabbage *rháphanos* as in Attic, even though the word now meant 'radish', instead of the current *krámbē* (*On the Powers of Foodstuffs* 2.44.5).

The cult of Atticism led to the proliferation of rival lists of acceptable and unacceptable. The extremist Phrynichus, who regarded Menander's language as corrupt and deprecated the use of Koine words found occasionally in Attic authors, conducted a lexicographical exchange with the imperial secretary

Cornelianus, who may lie behind Commodus' appointment to the imperial chair of rhetoric at Athens of Phrynichus' more moderate sparring-partner, Julius Pollux, author of an invaluable thesaurus (*Onomastikón*) and keen student of Attic expressions but no great user of them in his declamations.⁸ At the opposite extreme is the anonymous author, commonly known as the Antiatticist, of a list open to anything found even once in his broader canon, which includes the early poets and Herodotus; to be sure he does reject words, but sometimes it is the correct Attic word that he rejects, for instance *apokrínasthai* 'to answer' and *alêin* 'to grind', opting for the non-Attic *apokrithênai* and *alêthein*.

Herodotus indeed was accepted as an authority even by Aristides and Lucian, despite writing in Ionic, which in his hands was deemed a model of sweetness; but whole texts could in certain contexts be composed in that dialect. Lucian produced a Herodotean pastiche concerning the Syrian goddess Atargatis in which truth and fiction are inextricably woven, and a purported defense of astrology through an even more laughable rationalism, possibly modeled on some work attributed to Democritus; it was also presumably in Ionic that, in his lifelong war against charlatans, he concocted a treatise of meaningless gibberish in the name of the notoriously obscure Heracleitus, submitted for comment through intermediaries to a well-regarded philosopher who made a fool of himself by attempting to explain it.⁹ Arrian used Ionic, somewhat less marked than Lucian's, for his *Indiké*, which emulates Herodotus' mixture of ethnography and narrative by presenting a description of India followed by an account of Alexander's voyage thence to Persia; it may have been in this age that Aretaeus wrote a medical treatise in Ionic after the manner of the Hippocratic corpus, and an unknown author pretending to be Herodotus wrote a life of Homer in an Ionicized Koine.¹⁰

A fashion in some ways comparable with Atticism but yet distinct from it affects second-century Latin literature: the rejection of the Julio-Claudian authors (with the partial exception of the Augustans) and their Flavian successors, as if Latin literature had ended with Vergil or even Sallust. The latter was admired as an imitator of the elder Cato, for favor was now bestowed on pre-Ciceronian authors, from whose works writers liked to recover obsolete words and expressions. There was never an attempt to imitate them wholesale (in that respect the Latin counterpart of Atticism is the Renaissance); rather, they served for embellishment.

Throughout the early Empire there had been a minority taste for the early writers, often associated with moralistic contrast between the honest past and the corrupt present. This taste now became dominant, in consequence losing any hint of protest; indeed, the two contemporary authors who drew most attention to social and political ills, Juvenal and Tacitus, seem to have been as

much ignored as the more complacent younger Pliny. The fashion was encouraged by the tastes of Hadrian, who affected to prefer Ennius to Vergil, Cato to Cicero, and even Coelius Antipater to the archaizers' favorite Sallust; it was so pervasive that even Suetonius, the child of an earlier generation and commonly credited with a no-frills prose, can use expressions from the earlier language such as *nemo quisquam* 'no-one at all'.

Its supreme exponent, however, was the renowned orator Marcus Cornelius Fronto, suffect consul in July and August 142, who was tutor in Latin rhetoric to Marcus and L. Verus; although a few specimens of his oratory survive, it is above all his letters to Marcus that reveal his stylistic principles. Of these the most important was the choice of the best possible word at every point, ideally one that could not have been seen coming; this entailed the exact discrimination between words of similar meaning (the choice of verbal prefix might make all the difference) and the enlarging of one's vocabulary by reading the early authors – with the proviso that the archaic word must still be comprehensible. He regrets that Cicero had not thought it necessary to exercise similar care (though he unconditionally admires his letters). No mention or echo of Vergil can be detected in the surviving works; his affection for Horace (not shared by Marcus) is confessedly due to inhabiting the property of the latter's patron Maecenas.

In the fifth century other orators of the period were called *Frontoniani*; there is no reason to suppose that they saw themselves as such. Nor was there a party line imposed by either him or Hadrian: he commends Coelius, but quotes Sallust repeatedly; on the other hand Aulus Gellius, who does his best to make their relationship seem closer than it was, admires both Cicero and Vergil, and among the older writers the historian Claudius Quadrigarius, whom Fronto barely acknowledges, but not the mimographer Laberius, whom Fronto and Marcus relish.¹¹

Gellius, an antiquarian polymath with a particular interest in early language and literature, but also a literary artist who presents his material in a variety of ways, did not make his *Attic Nights* generally available till the end of Marcus' reign or even later, but his numerous reminiscences of intellectual life (whether or not they are to be taken at face value) are set in Pius' time; their name reflects their origin while their author was studying at Athens, probably in 147/8. They present a social world much concerned with correctness of Latinity (which was to be derived from pre-Augustan writers and not the rules laid down by schoolmasters) and a broad general knowledge but also one in which reading was a social rather than a private activity (Johnson (2010) especially 98–136). Like Fronto, he damns Seneca and warns against archaisms no longer understood; unlike Fronto, he eschews or condemns several post-Ciceronian developments in the Latin language and represents the second century BC as a time of moral as well as linguistic uprightness. Another difference is that he

exhibits more words not previously attested; he is likely to have coined at least some of them, a process that Fronto deprecated.

The importance of learning is also demonstrated by Apuleius of Madaura in the speech he gave to defend himself against a charge of magic before Claudius Maximus, proconsul of Africa, in 158/9, a *tour de force* of erudition in which he invites the governor as an educated man to take his side against his boorish and ignorant accusers.¹² In this speech we already find the flamboyant mixture of archaism and neologism that would mark his style throughout his life; like Gellius (with whom he seems to have been in contact) he is not afraid to make new words, but like Fronto he shows no interest in antique morality. We also find, most remarkably for a Latin speech, abundant quotation of the Greek in the original, the better to align him with the proconsul against the provincials.

Whereas in this period, as for much of the Empire, although some Greeks read Latin, none sought glory by saying so,¹³ Romans were as much under the spell of Greek as they had ever been; indeed, they were the more conscious of Greek cultural superiority for having rejected much of the literature with which previous generations had endowed their own language. The ban on Greek in all but the highest genres is lifted; Apuleius, speaking for his life, violates it even there, but he was sure enough of his Greek to declaim in it, though the declamations have not survived. Earlier in the century Suetonius, who wrote in both languages, had admitted Greek into his biographies; Gellius uses it for adornment even when he does not need to cite it for scholarship, and is prone to find Roman imitations of Greek literature inferior to the original. Even Fronto, who rebuked the young Marcus for composing in Greek and is presented by Gellius as a champion of Latin, not only wrote letters in Greek but preserved them.

These letters are in the artificial Attic of the age; although most of Gellius' Greek is quoted, he invents a sentence in Attic supposedly said by a pert slave. (Unfortunately both authors' Greek shows interference from Latin.) But the Herodotean alternative was recognized: Fronto speaks of a sweetness 'incorrupt and chaste, Tusculan and Ionic, that is of Cato and Herodotus'; in retelling the story of Arion from the latter, both authors attempt to recapture his noble simplicity by adopting, though not throughout, the former's narrative style of short, even very short paratactic sentences starting with third-person pronouns or adverbs meaning 'then' or 'there'.

3. Philosophy

Philosophy in the second century overwhelmingly spoke Greek, even when its practitioners had been brought up in a Latinate environment: this is true not only of Marcus, who uses Greek even in a work addressed to himself, but of

Favorinus, who, born a Roman citizen of ethnically Gaulish stock,¹⁴ came from the predominantly Latin-speaking colony of Arelate (the modern Arles, where the rue Favorin is named after him), but used Greek as both a sophist and a philosopher, and of the Athens-based Platonist L. Calvenus Taurus, who came from another such colony, later a bastion of Roman legal education, Berytus (now Beirut). The nearest that the Roman world has to a serious philosopher is Apuleius, who having produced a declamation on Socrates' 'god' went on to write in his later life (if doubts on authenticity are set aside) two books on Plato and an adaptation of the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *On the Universe*. In any case Apuleius also wrote in Greek, though nothing has survived.

Even Gellius, despite claiming a Latin-speaking philosopher called Macedo as his friend, and himself only a dabbler in the subject, does most of his dabbling in Greek authors even when Cicero had written on his topic; he is also torn between an interest in philosophical questions for their own sake, particularly those concerning logic, and the Roman biases in favor of ethics and against Greek cleverness, reinforced by a patriotic insistence that early Roman writers, especially Old Cato, were better teachers of morality than Greek humbugs. Hadrian's friend the poet Florus had written in like vein: 'Spurn foreign ways, they conceal a thousand frauds. No-one in the whole world lives more uprightly than a Roman citizen; indeed I prefer one Cato to three hundred Socrateses.'

To be sure, much ancient philosophy consisted in unoriginal moral instruction and advice on practical living; in this philosophers anticipated the Christian clergy, most of whom have always spent far more time on these matters than on the theological questions that interest historians of the Church. In our period this moral instruction was often on Stoic-Cynic lines, though total absence of passion encountered resistance in the name of Aristotelian moderation; Stoic propositional logic had become common property. Otherwise, though Hierocles shows an interest in the study of nature as being the soundest basis for ethics, the school, at least as represented by Epictetus and Marcus, concentrates on the latter. However, the apparent identity of the Maximus whose ethical teaching Marcus recalls at *Meditations* 1.15 with the Claudius Maximus addressed by Apuleius suggests that this is not the whole picture.

Stoicism no longer opposed imperial rule; Cynicism no longer set out to shock, though Oenomaus of Gadara wrote a treatise against oracles. Peregrinus Proteus, as we have seen, was a charlatan in Lucian's eyes, though Gellius thought him a grave and steadfast man; however, Lucian approvingly attributes to the Cynic Demonax pungent but witty sayings much like those ascribed to Diogenes himself.

The Epicurean school, though much denigrated by its rivals, enjoyed support at the highest level. In 121 Hadrian was persuaded by the dowager empress Plotina, herself an Epicurean (and largely responsible for his

succeeding Trajan), to repeal the rule that the head of the school must appoint his successor by a Roman will, which limited his choice to a Roman citizen; about this time Diogenes of Oenoanda (near modern İncealiler in south-western Turkey) caused a long account of Epicurean doctrine to be inscribed on a portico in the city. One Diogenianus,¹⁵ who attacked Stoic doctrines on fate, is conventionally assigned to this period. Later in the century, Alexander of Abonouteichos, preaching his new god, would stir up the crowd to cry against disbelievers with the call and response ‘Christians out!’ – ‘Epicureans out!’

There was far more intellectual life amongst the inheritors of Plato, even after the death of Plutarch. That is not to say that all Platonists were original thinkers; Maximus of Tyre was no more than a sophist who delivered uplifting speeches on philosophical themes. More serious, it appears, was Claudius Nicostratus, who attempted to discredit Aristotle’s *Categories* and was honored at Delphi, as a few years later was Taurus, who wrote against both Stoics and Peripatetics while being willing to borrow ideas from both, notably quoting Hierocles’ comment on Epicurus, that while ‘pleasure is the end’ was the credo of a whore, not even she would say ‘there is no Providence’; accordingly in his major work, a commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus*, he represented the world as created in time, which (unlike Plutarch) he did not believe, partly for ease of exposition, partly to save belief in Providence. Both these men taught in Athens, apparently from home rather than in a revived Academy; but there were distinguished Platonists elsewhere. One Gaius son of Xenon, also honored at Delphi, was presumably the Gaius (till recently regarded as the founder of a doctrinal school) who taught a Platonic lecturer at Pergamum; amongst the latter’s pupils was Galen, who a few years later, at Smyrna, heard Albinus, the author of a brief Introduction (*Eisagōgē*) to Plato’s dialogues. This Albinus must be distinguished from Alcinous, author of a rather more substantial *Didaskalikós* (‘Teaching Book’) or general survey of Platonism, and from the anonymous author of a commentary on Plato’s *Theaetetus*, both of whom seem, but cannot be proved, to date from our period.¹⁶

Nevertheless, although the prevailing tendency was the dogmatic Platonism that professed to teach the doctrines that Plato taught, the Academic skepticism that drew from Plato’s dialectic the principle of arguing on both sides and suspending judgment was not dead. It is a component in the philosophy of Plutarch, who had already become an authority even beyond the Greek world,¹⁷ and with whom both Taurus and Favorinus had been personally acquainted; the former as we have seen was a firm Platonist, but the latter defended the Academic position against Stoic objections in several treatises, one of which was entitled *Plutarch, or on the Academic Disposition* and another in which the Stoic Epictetus was matched with Plutarch’s slave Onesimus.¹⁸ These works are lost, and must be reconstructed from the hostile account of Galen, who pounces on inconsistencies that may result from changes of

position but may also reflect the different standpoints of the speakers. Favorinus' best writings, however, were said by Philostratus to be his account (in 10 books, as Gellius informs us) of the differences between Academics and Pyrrhonians (who claimed to be the only true skeptics), apparently in the attempt to reconcile them. In this he failed; Sextus Empiricus' attack on the Academics may well have been directed in part against his arguments.

However, the future lay with neither Academic nor Pyrrhonian skepticism but with dogmatic Platonism of an increasingly mystical nature, that admired Plato above all for proclaiming the superiority of soul to body; in this it had an affinity to some of the Gnostic sects within Christianity (indeed, in the next century the great Neoplatonist Plotinus would compose a polemic 'against the Gnostics'). This movement owed much to a revived interest in what passed for the teachings of Pythagoras, which after all had influenced Plato himself; Pythagoreanism had its own exponents, notably Nicomachus of Gerasa, who besides introductions to arithmetic and music theory, which have survived, and another to geometry, which has not, wrote on 'arithmetical theology' (the mystic power of numbers) and the life of Pythagoras. The mathematical interests of the Pythagorean School are evident in Theon of Smyrna, who though he wrote more advanced works now lost, is known directly through his *Mathematical Matters Useful for Reading Plato*, by no means merely technical.

Numenius of Apamea, whose works were intensively studied by Plotinus, treats Plato as a fellow-Pythagorean whose writings had unfortunately been open to misconstruction, the worst misconstruction being that of the skeptical Academy. He complained that the Platonists had not maintained unity of opinion (*homodoxía*) with Plato as the Epicureans had with their master. Like Alcinoüs and Apuleius, he transmuted Plato's Eternal and Demiurge into a first and second god; but he made this second god a dyad, a second-and-third god, and called these three gods respectively Father, Creator, and Creation. He also taught that just as the world had a good and an evil soul (Plato, *Laws* 896 E 4–6), so had human beings, whose twin souls he called rational and irrational.

Because Numenius cited as authorities 'the initiations, doctrines, and cultic institutions of the Brahmans, Jews, Magi, and Egyptians',¹⁹ even reportedly asking 'For what is Plato but Moses speaking Attic?',²⁰ he was of interest to Christian writers, from whom much of our information is derived; he is even said to have told, as a moral allegory, a story about Jesus, without naming him. Attempts have therefore been made to find non-Hellenic sources for his teachings; while it would be remarkable if a thinker who grew up in Syria and took an interest in other peoples' traditions were unaffected by their ideas, by the same token it seems unreasonable to suppose that he found either Greek or foreign thought in a state of genetic purity. More significant is that he points in the direction of Neoplatonism, as do the contemporary *Chaldaean Oracles* probably composed by Julian the Theurgist²¹ (whom some credited with the

Rain Miracle that saved Marcus' army), of which the surviving fragments expound a complex supernatural apparatus headed by three Intellects. Scholars have debated whether Numenius drew on Julian, or Julian on Numenius, or both on a common tradition.

Some of Numenius' language was apparently adopted by Atticus, whose attested *floruit* of 176 makes him likely to have been the first holder of the Platonic chair founded by Marcus. Any such influence, however, had its limits: in maintaining (like Plutarch) that the world had been created in time, a view that put him at odds with other Platonists, he emphasized that 'Plato, a Greek, has spoken clearly to us Greeks', innuendo 'even if the Syrian Numenius misunderstands him'. He also attacked Aristotle on all fronts, as uninspired in ethics, like Epicurus in theology, and as looking for fights to pick with Plato.

In course of time Neopythagorean Platonism would become a religion to be accepted by faith instead of reason; that was not yet the case, and such credulity could be assailed in Jews and Christians by Galen (Walzer (1949)) without the need to censure current Hellenic thought as well. Christianity was also attacked as turning its back on education by the Platonist Celsus.

Numerous Aristotelian commentaries were written in the first half of the century by Aspasius, of which that on the *Nicomachean Ethics* survives in part; he is also credited by Albertus Magnus in the 13th century with a book on natural passions. His pupil Herminus in turn taught Alexander of Aphrodisias, the most renowned Peripatetic thinker after Aristotle himself and Theophrastus, who flourished in the time of Septimius Severus. Alexander occasionally cites his teacher Aristoteles of Mytilene, who offered further reasons besides Aristotle's why causes could not be infinite, and quotes his pantheistic account of the Active Intellect. Also from Aphrodisias, earlier in the century, had come Adrastus, who although a Peripatetic wrote a commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* perhaps used by Theon of Smyrna. He did not write formal commentaries on Aristotle, but historical and lexicographical studies on the *Nicomachean Ethics* and on Theophrastus.²² From Galen we hear of eminent Roman Aristotelians, one of whom, Cn. Claudius Severus (cos. II 173), is said to have instructed Marcus (*HA Marcus* 3.1); however, the Severus of *Meditations* 1.14 taught him to admire Stoic anti-monarchists, together with the Syracusan Dio and Roman Brutus paired by Plutarch.

4. History

Tacitus had no successors in this age; all that Latin historiography could supply were summaries like those by Florus and Granius Licinianus, and the flattering accounts of Verus' Parthian Wars by Fronto. Greeks wrote similar works,

known only from Lucian's scathing *How to Write History*, but also counted two important historians, Appian and Arrian.

Appian of Alexandria, having narrowly escaped the Jewish revolt there under Trajan, became *advocatus fisci* at Rome and then an imperial procurator; nevertheless, despite the knowledge of Latin that his functions required and his choice of subject implied, it was in Greek that he exchanged letters with Fronto and wrote his history of Rome from the regal period to the death of Sextus Pompeius. Despite unreliability in details, his history is valuable especially for the Third Punic War and the troubled times from the Gracchi to Sertorius; in particular, he has evidently used a source more sympathetic to the *populares* than other fully preserved authorities.

Flavius Arrianus (Arrian) of Nicomedia (the modern İzmit), who created as many parallels as he could between himself as the new Xenophon and the 'elder Xenophon, son of Gryllus', entitled his account of Alexander's wars *Anabasis*, the March Up-Country, recalling that of Xenophon's Ten Thousand. He reacted against the already romanticized accounts we call the 'vulgate', preferring to rely on sources he deemed more trustworthy, in particular Alexander's comrade Ptolemy, founder of the Macedonian dynasty in Egypt. His stated reason, that it would be especially disgraceful for a king to lie, can escape mockery only if understood as 'be caught in a lie'; nevertheless, he is our best source, though fashion has now swung to panning the vulgate for nuggets to believe. As we have seen, he wrote of Alexander's departure from India in a separate work; he also wrote numerous other histories, preserved only in fragments, a treatise on military tactics, a guide to the Black Sea shore, and a book on hunting that treated of 'those things that Xenophon left out', having already recorded the discourses of Epictetus, though without invoking his predecessor's *Memorabilia*.

5. Medicine

The second century, like other affluent societies, shows a heightened interest in health and disease. Plutarch wrote *Advice on Keeping Well*, and makes frequent reference elsewhere to medical matters; Gellius asserts that it is shameful for an educated person not to have a passing acquaintance with the subject (*Attic Nights* 18.10.8). With affluence too came its diseases: there are numerous references to gout, the heroine of a satirical play by Lucian. One sufferer was Fronto, in whose correspondence with Marcus that and other maladies are often mentioned; but the valetudinarian of the age was Aelius Aristides, who belongs as much in the history of superstition as in that of scientific medicine, but whose triumph over a feeble body is acknowledged by Galen.

Like philosophers, and under their influence, doctors were divided into sects: by no means every doctor was a devotee of Hippocrates, or rather of the writings and teachings said to be his. There were followers of the great Alexandrians Herophilus and Erasistratus; there were Pneumatists, who in the Stoic manner gave a commanding role to *pneûma* ('spirit'), and whose outstanding representative, Archigenes of Apamea under Trajan, was laid under extensive contribution by Galen for facts and treatments despite his theoretical disagreement;²³ there were Empirics, who rejected all theory and investigation into causes, relying on experience (in Greek: *empeiría*) of what had worked before, for themselves or others – including Hippocrates, revered for his case studies. In English 'empiric' became a longer word for 'quack', reflecting Plato's contempt for mere *empeiría* as opposed to *téchnē*, skill based on rational knowledge; but the Empirics included men who deserved respect.

Distinct from the Empirics were the Methodists, who supplemented experience with theories about the *koinótētes* ('commonalities') between diseases. Since the history of the sect is told by its enemies, the truth is not always easy to discern, particularly as it is not always clear whether positions attributed to one Methodist were held by others; however, one second-century adherent was Soranus of Ephesus, whom even Galen admired, and whose gynecological writings (preserved when most of his other works were lost) are well regarded even now. On the other hand, Galen recounts with undisguised glee how another Methodist called Attalus, who had made the Cynic philosopher Theagenes (Peregrinus' associate) his star patient, invited his friends to witness his recovery, only to find that he was dead.

There were in addition doctors who belonged to no school, though their designation as eclectics was sometimes represented as an allegiance like any other. One such, Rufus of Ephesus, won not only the respect of Galen, but the admiration of the Arabs; however, the greatest eclectic, despite his strong Hippocratic leanings, was Galen himself. We are dependent for his career on his own accounts, not always consistent except in self-praise; even on his own showing he was as boastful as any cook or grammarian, but little as we moderns may relish the thought of being treated by any ancient doctor, if we were transported to the age of Marcus it is Galen whom we should consult.

Born at Pergamum in 129, the son of a leading architect, he enjoyed an excellent all-round as well as professional education, in particular hearing lectures from all four main philosophical schools and studying all the schools of medicine before he embarked on a medical career. When civil strife broke out he came to Rome in 162, where besides treating patients he gave anatomical demonstrations; he was one of those who thought an interest in medicine an indispensable component of culture (Johnson (2010) 77–78). One patient, a Peripatetic called Eudemus, took him seriously as a philosopher from the outset but set no store by his medical pretensions until he had first-hand experience of

the newcomer's superiority to the local physicians; this indeed he took every opportunity to demonstrate, earning the title 'teller of unlikely tales' (*paradoxológos*) from his jealous enemies but 'doer of unlikely deeds' (*paradoxopoios*) from those who had witnessed his cures.²⁴

It can hardly have soothed his rivals' feelings that this bumptious provincial was their superior in birth, wealth, and education; so great was their resentment that he fled back home three years after his arrival – or so he says; elsewhere he improbably blames the Great Plague, which was raging in Asia but had not yet reached Rome.²⁵ Nevertheless, in 168 he was summoned to attend Marcus and Verus at their winter quarters in Aquileia at the outset of the First Marcomannic War; evidently the testimonials of eminent patients counted for more than professional jealousies. No sooner had he arrived, however, than the emperors departed to avoid an outbreak of plague; when Marcus returned (Verus having died), he wished to take Galen with him to the war, but on the physician's report of a contrary order from his 'ancestral god' Asclepius (*On His Own Books* 3.5), left instruction for him to be called in should his young son Commodus fall ill. The boy did so; Galen remarks that though his treatment was thought wonderful, it was straight out of his own books, and not to be set beside his cure of Marcus himself (probably between the two German wars). He remained an imperial physician throughout successive reigns, evidently concealing his contempt for Commodus (*On Not Feeling Grief* 54,²⁶ *On Antidotes* 1.13) more successfully than that for other doctors but doing his best for his victims none the less; he survived political upheavals to die at the age of 87.

Although Galen refused to follow any one school of medicine, he constantly quoted the Hippocratic writings, claiming to understand them better than the professed Hippocratics and supporting his interpretations with philological erudition; these he canonized in his numerous commentaries, so that if Galen was not a Hippocratic, he did his best to make Hippocrates a Galenist. Yet he was by no means content to stand in the ancient ways; in particular he developed a highly sophisticated pulse-lore and took anatomy to a level it would not surpass before Vesalius in the 16th century. Even now, he is admired for his holistic approach to medicine and his insistence on constant study.

Of Galen's books, some perished in Roman fires, many were lost after his death, and others – by no means all published – survive only in translation (mostly in Arabic, but also Syriac, Hebrew, and Latin); nevertheless the preserved Greek works make up about a tenth of all extant Greek literature down to the mid fourth century (Nutton (2004) 390 n. 22). Such was his reputation that the forgery of works in his name began in his lifetime (*On His Own Books*, *prol.* 1); it still was practiced in the 16th century, when his three-book commentary on Hippocrates' *On Humours*, known only from quotations, was reconstituted.²⁷ Nor did he write on medicine alone, but on grammar, rhetoric, and above all philosophy, on which subject his treatises

range from an introduction to logic,²⁸ through a study of sophisms, to a demonstration that the best physician is also a philosopher. In short, ‘that excellent Author was not only a Great Man in his own Faculty, but in all parts of Learning’ (Bentley (1699) 13 = (1883) 81).

6. Roman Law

The most important legal development of the age was the deepening co-involvement of emperors and jurists in the oversight of justice. This was due to the emperor Hadrian, who though notorious for showing other professors that he knew better respected legal expertise and harnessed it to his service. Two much-debated texts appear to state that he issued an edict requiring the lay judge (*iudex*) to abide by the unanimous view of imperially authorized jurists – those with the *ius publice respondendi* (‘right of answering with public authority’) introduced by Augustus – but leaving him free to choose when they disagreed, that is to say, not bound by the majority or any other formal criterion (Gaius, *Institutes* 1.7), and (though this is disputed) that he terminated the granting of such authorization altogether (Pomponius, *Digest* 1.2.2.49); as a result, persons in search of an authoritative ruling would request it from the emperor, whose reply (‘rescript’) was drafted by a jurist appointed as *a libellis* (Honoré (1994)). The amount of imperial input varied according to the interest or competence of the ruler; the enquiries ranged from the elementary to the highly complex.

Hadrian also had the praetor’s edict given its final form by the age’s most eminent lawyer, Salvius Julianus (Julian), whose excellence in learning earned him double pay and who went on to occupy important posts under succeeding emperors; this put a formal end to the long tradition of legal reform by praetors. In addition he created a career structure for jurists of equestrian status and appointed them to his council, developments that encouraged the professionalization of the law.

This did not mean that other jurists did not cease to give advice, although it is for their treatises that they are quoted in the *Digest* along with others for whom teaching and writing seem to have been more important. In the former group may be mentioned Sex. Caecilius Africanus, who is made by Gellius to defend certain provisions of the Twelve Tables against Favorinus and was notorious among medieval students for the difficulty of his writings; in the latter Pomponius, whose summary account of Roman legal history is problematic but indispensable, and Gaius, whose introductory textbook (*Institutes*) became the foundation of late-imperial legal instruction and was particularly relished by Justinian, who based his own like-named textbook on the work of ‘our favourite Gaius’ (*Gaius noster*).

The standard procedure (*ordo*) in most civil cases was for the praetor to state the matters at issue in a set of instructions (*formula*) according to which the judge (*iudex*), either chosen by the parties or appointed by the praetor himself from an official register (*album*), should after hearing the case give judgment for the plaintiff or the defendant. However, there was already a new ‘non-standard’ procedure (*extra ordinem*) that would ultimately displace the other, in which a magistrate either heard the whole case or delegated it to a judge. In later ages this judge would be a trained lawyer, but in the second century there was no such requirement under either procedure.

7. Other Disciplines

The most learned man of the age was Claudius Ptolemaeus, in English Ptolemy, who lived in Alexandria and wrote extant works on several scientific disciplines. His astronomical writings, notably the *Mathēmatikē Síntaxis* (‘Mathematical Treatise’),²⁹ completed in 147, and also his *Geography*, remained the basic source of information on their subjects until the 16th century; he also wrote on music theory (attempting to mediate between the Pythagorean and Aristoxenean schools) and epistemology, besides a treatise on optics partly preserved by way of Arabic in Latin and lost books on geometry and mechanics. In addition he wrote a four-book work on astrology, which included a defense of the discipline against attack; other treatises on sciences no longer in credit are the *Oneirokritiká* (‘On Reading Dreams’) by Artemidorus of Daldis in Lydia³⁰ and the sophist Polemo’s *Physiognōmoniká*, known from Greek summaries, a Latin compilation, and an Arabic translation. Neither Artemidorus nor his clients cared in the least about their suppressed fantasies or their relations with their mothers, but only in what would happen to them; his work is a rich resource for the social history of his age – an age in which a Galen and a Marcus could take dreams seriously. Polemo not only professed to read the mind’s construction in the face (and other anatomy, but principally the eyes), but to give warning against imminent misconduct. (He also presents poisonous accounts of unnamed persons, one of whom was easily identified by his Latin adaptor as Favorinus.)

In grammar, the simplistic antithesis of analogy, the attempt to make the language obey fixed rules, and anomaly, the argument that it cannot be so regulated, had long given way to more complex understandings; analogy survived, but it might be challenged by current educated speech (when this was not rejected as corrupt), or in Greek by Attic usage, in Latin by that of the best writers, or of the ancients (in archaists’ eyes the same thing). The most important grammarians were Apollonius Dyscolus (‘Bad-Tempered’), an extreme analogist and author of numerous works some of which have survived,

notably the only Greek treatise on syntax that we possess, and his son Herodian, who retreated from his father's untenable positions and whose 20-book study of accentuation survives in epitomes. Other significant writers were Hephaestion, who wrote a handbook on meter, and Harpocration, whose lexicon to the Attic orators is of especial value for economic and legal vocabulary. They were tutors to Marcus and Verus respectively; another grammarian who taught Marcus, Alexander of Cotiaeum, the subject of a posthumous tribute from Aristides, is represented by fragments mostly concerning Homer, but wrote on much else.

In Latin Velius Longus and Terentius Scaurus both wrote on orthography, besides commentaries that have been lost; C. Sulpicius Apollinaris of Carthage is known both from the summaries prefixed to Terence's comedies and from Gellius' praises of his learning. Gellius also tells us about the slightly earlier Caesellius Vindex, whose works left much to be desired, and his own contemporaries Domitius Insanus, learned but unsociable, and Aelius Melissus, whom he dismisses as a showman without solid merit. His anecdotes about ignorant grammarians shown up by himself or another, though no doubt fictitious, are hardly surprising in an unregulated market of uncertified practitioners.

Gellius, who did not need to earn a living, looks down on grammarians, that is to say schoolmasters, as social inferiors ill versed in the ancient writers, who invent unsound rules of analogy; he does not stop to consider that these might have had pedagogical value as rules of thumb, like our equally useful and equally unsound 'I before E except after C'. However, he was quite right to consider himself (as he manifestly does) superior to the professionals in learning and ability; he also surpasses them in bestowing serious attention on syntax, although in contrast to Priscian (and to Apollonius) he does not write systematically, but takes his departure from, or leads up to, a particular passage of an author.

Military handbooks continued to be written: Arrian, who had seen active service, wrote his *Taktiká* near the end of Hadrian's reign, about the same time as the emperor invited Apollodorus of Damascus, who had been Trajan's favored architect, to send him his thoughts on siege-engines for the Jewish War; Apollodorus replied with an extant treatise and sent him local engineers as well. (Some scholars, however, date it to Trajan's reign.) Later, during the Parthian War, Polyaeus, claiming that as a Macedonian he knew how to defeat Iranians, dedicated eight books of *Stratēgēmata* to Marcus and Verus.

8. Poetry

According to the modern understanding of epic poetry as narrative about great exploits, the only Greek epic poem known to have been written in the entire second century is Pancrates' brief eulogy of Hadrian and Antinous' lion-hunt;

in Latin, Apuleius composed a now lost poem, presumably in hexameters, on the merits of Scipio Orfitus, proconsul of Africa in 163/4, and quotes three lines about the mouths of the Ganges from his friend Clemens' poem on Alexander the Great.³¹ By the ancient definition, on the other hand, epic is anything written in continuous hexameters, including didactic poems, which flourished, at any rate in quantity, amongst the Greeks. There have survived three books on astrology by a poet born on May 28, 80 transmitted under the name of Manetho along with three others, probably later, of which two purport to be dedicated to 'King Ptolemy'; hexameters by the physician Marcellus of Side on the healing powers of fish and (inscribed on her tomb) the death of Herodes' wife Regilla; poems by Dionysius of Alexandria on precious stones and world geography (that on bird-catching survives only in prose paraphrase); a fragment by one Naumachius on wifely duties; and five books on fishing dedicated to Marcus during his joint reign with Commodus by Oppian of Cilicia.

Epigrams continued to be written, as throughout the whole period of ancient literary culture; no fewer than 63 are attributed to Lucian, although not all are accepted as his work. However, the mostly pederastic epigrams of Strato, long regarded as the major production of the second century, may after all have been written not under Hadrian but Nero or the Flavians.

The few light pieces that survive of Apuleius' abundant oeuvre in all genres and both languages (if we may take his word for it) are all in Latin; they include two epigrams (both pederastic), iambics on tooth-powder, and a translation (or expansion) of a speech from Menander spoken by an impotent man on the pleasures he cannot have. He may also be the author of a poem in iambic dimeters amplifying the thought of a pseudo-Platonic epigram; the iambic dimeter was also used by other poets for verses on Roman history and prehistory, and by Hadrian in his valediction to his soul. Hadrian himself used lyric meters in a poem on a favorite horse, and in a jocular exchange with his friend Florus; the wine-grower Annianus wrote light lyric verse on viticulture.

Although new dramas would continue to be written (whether or not performed) to the end of antiquity, the liveliest stage-forms were the mime and pantomime; in contrast to modern usage, it was the latter in which the chief performer was mute. Mime flourished; the surviving fragments of text suggest an exciting and amusing entertainment for the mass public. The plots sometimes recall themes from classical drama, but knowledge of the latter is not presupposed.

Greek poets also wrote lyric poetry, and even devised a new meter, the *apókroton* (curtailed), $\cup\cup - \cup\cup - \cup\cup - \cup -$, the $\cup\cup$ pairs being replaceable by $-$. The meter is used in an inscription about the pains of gout (*Inscriptiones Graecae* ii². 4514) and, mixed with paroemiacs ($\cup\cup - \cup\cup - \cup\cup - -$), in Lucian's

parodic (and polymetric) tragedy on the same subject (*Podagra* 87–111); the mixture is also found, along with various mostly anapestic meters, in the poems of Mesomedes, court musician to Hadrian, who has left us a number of invocations of and hymns to deities, together with poems on such subjects as the sundial, a gnat, and a boorish peasant who tried to kill a swan, without clear distinction between serious pieces and light.

9. Music

Five of Mesomedes' poems, all serious, are transmitted with their musical settings; others are attested in scholia, though not all these are attached to the right texts. The music is simple and tuneful, befitting the style of the poems; only one has any notes outside its mode, which has aroused the suspicion that it is of earlier date. Other music of the period, however, preserved in papyrus fragments, shows greater complexity, with florid melismas and modulations between modes; in the transmitted remnants vocal music predominates over instrumental, but almost no earlier instrumental music has survived. Word-accent is generally respected, acute syllables being at least no lower than their neighbors and circumflexes set to descending intervals.

On the tombstone of one Seikilos, now attributed to this century, is a brief poem with full musical notation bidding the listener always be cheerful since life is short; the tune is simple, in the diatonic Iastian mode, in which (as conventionally transcribed, perhaps a minor semitone above modern concert pitch) F and C are sharp. Also from this date are two papyrus fragments of post-classical tragedy with musical settings even though the texts are in dialogue meter.

10. Novels

Apart from oratory, the most flourishing literary genre of the period was one that contemporaries do not seem to have recognized and for which they had no name: the novel or romance. In the ninth century Patriarch Photius, who gave brief accounts of several such works in his *Library*, sometimes used the term *dramatikón*; dramatic in the non-technical sense and action-packed they certainly are. The most frequent pattern in the surviving Greek novels (including Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirrhoe*, which may precede our period, and the Renaissance favorite Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, from the third century) is, if we ignore the subplots that these authors relish no less than Shakespeare: boy meets girl, they fall in love, they are separated by parents, pirates, and every other conceivable human, natural, or supernatural interference, and undergo

such adventures as apparent death and sojourns in the underworld, until finally they are reunited and can marry. The girl has always remained faithful throughout, the boy sometimes – which would not even have been expected of him in a previous age. Characterization may not meet 19th-century standards of individualizing detail, credibility may falter as the complexities accumulate, but for excitement and suspense the tales are hard to beat. In this vein are, besides the two novels already mentioned, the *Cleitophon and Leucippe* of Achilles Tatius, the *Ephesian Affairs* of one Xenophon, called ‘of Ephesus’ after his title, and Antonius Diogenes’ *Wonders beyond Thule*, of which we have only Photius’ report and a papyrus scrap. A variation is Iamblichus’ ill-preserved *Babylonian Affairs*, in which the lovers are already married, but do not live happily ever after, since the wife attracts the unwelcome attention of the widowed king. Lollianus’ *Phoenician Affairs* is even more fragmentary, but we are able to read the brief report ‘I found the Persian woman waiting for me inside; and that was when I had my first experience of sex’, as well as an extended account of a child sacrifice. Longus in his *Daphnis and Chloe* downgrades the external obstacles to concentrate on the difficulties of sexual awakening; his novel owes its success with modern readers to its eroticism and its rural setting.

This, however, was not the only kind of novel. The picaresque narrative in prose and verse familiar from Petronius appears in a fragmentary Greek tale (*Oxyrhynchus Papyrus* no. 3010) involving a eunuch-priest and a catamite; another tale of adventure, that of ‘Lucius, or the Ass’, about a man turned into a donkey but retaining his human mind, was recounted briefly by Lucian and at great length in the *Metamorphoses* of Lucius of Patrae, which have not survived, and of Apuleius, which have. Photius, who had read both Greek authors, judged that Lucian was likelier to have abridged Lucius’ first two books than the latter to have expanded the former; some modern scholars have suspected the Patrenian of being Lucian under another name. Lucius’ sufferings and adventures until the restoration of his human form are told by Lucian and Apuleius with general similarities but detailed differences; however, after the release Apuleius adds a book in a very different tone recounting initiation into the cult of Isis. Another version of the encounter between woman on heat and donkey is found in *Oxyrhynchus Papyrus* no. 4762; new fragments of novels continue to appear (Henrichs (2011)).

Although, having no classical precedents, the ancient novel was beneath the dignity of the educated to mention, it was not beneath their dignity to read; moreover, unlike the mime it exhibits far too high a degree of literary allusion and overall sophistication to have been intended for the broad masses. By contrast, there were genuine folkbooks: the purported history of Alexander’s conquests nowadays styled the *Alexander Romance*,³² a collection of tall tales first attested in the third century but far older in origin, and the

Christian moralization of facts and fictions from natural history known as the *Physiologus* from the recurrent phrase *ho Physiólōgos phēsí*, ‘the Naturalist says’, which was probably first compiled in our period; both these works exist in varying recessions and were translated with further adaptation into virtually all the languages of Christendom, the *Romance* into those of Islam as well. It is at this time too that the *Life of Aesop*, likewise a folkbook, is first attested, though that also has far older roots. We may also mention here the apocryphal gospels, acts, and apocalypses that began to abound amongst Christians.

11. Visual Arts

The cult of the past did not extend to architecture, which was not constrained by the classical tradition (it was the Renaissance that canonized Vitruvius) but, while still governed by symmetry, axiality, and clarity of forms, experimented with those forms and their combination in ways that anticipated the European Baroque (MacDonald (1982–1988) ii. 221–47). There was ample scope for this in the many temples and civic buildings erected all over the empire during the prosperous second century. In Greece several of these were due to the munificence of Herodes Atticus, notably the theater in Athens that still bears his name and the aqueduct at Olympia that met a need never before fulfilled; his wife Regilla contributed the nymphaeum and apparently another at the Peirene spring in Corinth. In Rome there was no great building program under the Antonines as there had been under Hadrian, but Pius put up a temple in the Forum Romanum to his deified wife Faustina, which Marcus rededicated to ‘Antoninus and Faustina’; it later became the church of San Lorenzo in Miranda.

Little can be said of painting, since almost nothing survives apart from the Fayyum mummy portraits, which like the Severan tondo from a little later represent their subjects in full face with eyes focused on the viewer, and, despite a conventional scheme, give the impression of realism by varying details. Sculpture flourished, creating such notable works as the Antonine Column and the equestrian statue of Marcus, and even acquired a new genre, the sarcophagus with a mythological frieze, as it became the norm to bury bodies rather than burn them. The commemorative type of the beautiful youth dead on the point of manhood, propagated by Hadrian’s cult of Antinous, was adopted by Herodes Atticus for his own beloved Vibullius Polydeucion. There is a renewed attention to past Greek models and an emphasis on the sensuous: a more plastic rendering of the body, with soft and smooth contours, hair in locks rather than strands, polishing of the marble. The eyes are no longer painted, but sculpted in relief, and as the century progresses increasingly deep-set, creating an impression of spirituality reinforced by the tendency towards sad expressions.

12. The Impact of the Emperor

Particular emphasis had been laid in Marcus' education on rhetoric and philosophy; his zeal for the latter, above all in its Stoic variety, was and is the best-known fact about him. Even as emperor he continued to attend philosophical lectures, though not everyone approved (Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 2.1.9), and in late antiquity is said to have even given them before departing on his second German expedition in 178.³³ It is not surprising that a great number of charlatans pretended to be philosophers in the hope of getting money out of him (Cassius Dio 71.32.5). This is at any rate testimony to his effect on the tone of life at Rome; the introspective seriousness of his portraiture tells in the same direction.

During his visit to Athens in 176, Marcus established publicly funded chairs for the four major philosophical schools, Platonist, Peripatetic, Epicurean, and Stoic. It was normal for anyone who took the subject seriously to study all schools of thought, as not only Marcus but Galen and the Christian apologist Justin Martyr did, and as Lucian rebukes his figment Hermotimus for not doing. However, the philosophical emperor did not himself choose the professors, but entrusted the task to Herodes Atticus, who may have been advised in the matter by the new Sacred Gerousia that Marcus had established (Oliver (1970) 84, cf. (1941)); at the time he was attempting to reconcile the Athenians with Herodes as one devoted to culture (*paideía*). By contrast, he had already, some two years earlier, himself appointed the first holder of his new chair in rhetoric, an enemy of Herodes' by name Theodotus, and after him, still before his visit, nominated Hadrian of Tyre, relying on his reputation, though he afterwards went to hear him and proposed a theme. In fact, despite Fronto's wails, he had never abandoned rhetoric, and not merely because making speeches was required of any emperor: he continued to attend declamations, made the sophist Alexander of Seleuceia (unkindly known as Clay-Plato) his Greek secretary, and still received advice from Fronto, though he did not always heed his warnings against the learned obscurity to which his taste for archaism could lead.³⁴

The establishment of the rhetorical chair is all the more notable for the existence of the civic chair in the same subject; if Dio's (or his epitomator Xiphilinus') vague statement that Marcus appointed teachers on annual salaries 'for all people' (71.31.3) implies some manner of exclusion in the existing arrangements, the contrast would suit well both with philosophical notions of world citizenship and with the concerns of a universal emperor.

It is not always easy to assess rulers' contributions to the culture of their times; but although the cult of the past had burgeoned under Hadrian, and Pius was as virtuous an emperor as any could desire, neither had the dedication

to philosophy that Marcus had. Yet philosophy was already cultivated; Marcus did not stamp a new concern for it out of the ground but rather encouraged one already present.

Although he had had a sound literary and rhetorical education and been taught to paint, Marcus does not appear to have had a direct influence on the arts. Rhetoric apart, we do not read of their practitioners at his court; his Latin secretaries were chosen for military rather than literary prowess; and when Orfitus dedicated to Marcus a quadrifrontal domed arch built at Oea (now Tripoli in Libya) at the expense of the local notable C. Calpurnius Celsus, so far as we can tell the interesting design owed nothing to the emperor.

On the other hand, rulers cannot always foresee the consequences of their actions. Marcus' care for the upbringing and oversight of Commodus was in vain; but when he recalled Galen from Pergamum, though his concern was not with rendering services to medicine but with promoting his own and his army's benefit, he nevertheless conferred on the physician a prestige that would bring his writings the respect that they deserved in societies that did not yet exist. Above all, he cannot have imagined that his *Meditations* would be read and studied nearly two millennia after his death, and cause his name to be held in reverence even by the Christians for whom he had so little love – even indeed to be bestowed by a courtly friar on a work of moralizing fiction.³⁵

NOTES

1. Galen (1988) 112.11–114.1.
2. I follow contemporary practice and modern convention by calling Latin-speakers Romans and Greek-speakers Greeks, irrespective of geographical or ethnic origin.
3. Both had been killed at Marathon: Callimachus in such a tight press of soldiers that his corpse had no room to fall down, Cynegeirus holding back an enemy ship with his left hand after his right had been cut off in the same posture.
4. Later Ionopolis became a bishopric; its name survives in modern Turkish İnebolu.
5. These tensions have been wrongly generalized, but Kasulke (2005) goes too far in denying their existence; see Holford-Strevens (2007).
6. A scholarly interest in the Attic dialect can already be detected in the Hellenistic grammarians; see *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 2744, 3710; Aristophanes of Byzantium (who also wrote on Laconian), fragments 337–47 in Slater (1986); and Crates of Mallos fragments 106–21 in Broggiato (2001), also Broggiato (2000). But that is not the same as declaring Attic forms to be more correct than others, though Broggiato suspects that such an agenda was already in existence (Broggiato (2000) 370).
7. The story of Favorinus' meekly allowing himself to be rebuked by Hadrian for using a word he might have defended, rather than quarrel with the lord of 30

legions (*HA Vita Hadriani* 15.12–13), may well have a Greek rather than a Latin context.

8. See Argyle (1989) and Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 2.12, who, however, asserts that he owed his appointment to his mellifluous voice. The scholia to Lucian's *Instructor of Public Speakers* report a suggestion that he was the original of the meretricious rhetor in that dialogue, who had risen from an Egyptian called Potheinos (Pollux came from Naucratis) to a namesake of Zeus and Leda's sons – Castor and Pollux.
9. Galen, *Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics* 2.6.29, preserved in Arabic (Strohmaier (1976)); he played a similar trick on grammarians who sought sense in expressions composed without it.
10. For an exhaustive study of these texts see Lightfoot (2003) 91–161, and for the authenticity of the Lucianic works Lightfoot (2003) 184–208.
11. See Holford-Strevens (2003) 131–39.
12. That is not because educated people did not believe in witchcraft, for they did, but because irrespective of the facts it was the safest strategy, especially given that Apuleius, in demonstrating his superior erudition, shows not a little acquaintance with the arts that he disowns; later in the century Hadrian of Tyre would deliver a speech arguing that the woman who had broken the spell, cast by a witch condemned to be burnt, that had prevented the fire from taking, should herself be burnt simply for her knowledge. That Apuleius' speech was successful is proved by his survival.
13. Lucian, in deploring the lot of the Greek intellectual in a Roman household, can be seen to counter Juvenal's satire on the *Graeculus esuriens*, but the piece can be read and enjoyed on its own terms without reference to it. See in general Holford-Strevens (1993); Hose (2007).
14. His own statements to that effect are supported by the fact that only his *cognomen* is known; we may surmise that his *nomen* was as indistinctive as those of enfranchised natives commonly were, probably Iulius.
15. Not to be confused with a namesake who collected proverbs.
16. The account of these philosophers in Dillon (1996) 266–306, taken over from the first edition of 1977, is corrected 445–47.
17. Gellius cites him in the very first chapter of his first book and several times thereafter; the narrator of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* claims maternal descent from Plutarch and his nephew Sextus, himself a Platonic philosopher who taught Marcus and Verus.
18. Epictetus had imagined himself an Academic's slave, perverting his orders and turning his skepticism against him (*Dissertation* 2.20.29). But by this pairing Favorinus implied that such knockabout stuff was unworthy even of the slave-quarters.
19. Numenius (1979) fr. 1.
20. Numenius (1979) fr. 8 with n. 4, citing a suggestion that Numenius compared Exodus 3: 14 in the Septuagint version, 'I am he that is', with Plato, *Timaeus* 27 D, 'that which always is'. However, although Numenius called Moses (or Musaeus, like Orpheus' teacher) 'a man most able to pray to God', he seems

- to have regarded him as a magician, and no greater than his opponents Jannes and Jambres (fr. 9).
21. A theurgist is one who by suitable ceremonies can become united with the divine and through it work miracles.
 22. Aristocles of Sicilian Messene (now Messina), who used to be placed in this period, has now been moved back the previous century or even that before it.
 23. Aretaeus of Cappadocia, who writes a Hippocratizing Ionic and from whom Galen appropriated an anecdote (Nutton (2004) 205), may have lived in the second century, but is sometimes dated to the first.
 24. *On Prognosis* 8.1; *On the Method of Healing* 10.4; *On Recognizing the Best Physician* 4.1–2; the cases selected to prove him the latter vary between the narratives. Cf. *On the Teachings of Hippocrates and Plato* 2.4.29.
 25. The facts, if that is the right word, of Galen's departure and return are narrated in *On Prognosis* and *On His Own Books*.
 26. For this newly discovered work see Boudon-Millot et al. (2010).
 27. See Deichgräber (1973) 42–45; the work exhibits bad Greek, and at 3.13 draws on the Latin author Aulus Gellius. The genuine commentary survives in an unpublished Arabic translation, itself made from Syriac.
 28. However, the widespread attribution to Galen of the fourth syllogistic figure cannot stand (Morison (2008) 85–91).
 29. Commonly known as the *Almagest* from an Arabic corruption of *hē megistē sūntaxis* ('the greatest treatise').
 30. Later called Flaviocaesarea; near Kemer, in the Turkish province of Manisa.
 31. The 30-book *Antoninias* on the deeds of Pius and Marcus said by *HA Gordiani tres* 3.3 to have been written by Gordian I along with poems on the same subjects as Cicero's were never meant to be believed in.
 32. In using *Romance* rather than *Novel*, I follow normal English usage; the distinction is not made in German, which speaks of *der Alexanderroman*. Since in any case these classifications are modern (the texts style themselves 'history'), there is no point in arguing their merits; but no self-respecting historical novelist would write a work so remote from any possible reality.
 33. Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 16.9; *HA Avidius Cassius* 3.6–7.
 34. See Fronto, *De orationibus* 13, 16; Cassius Dio 71.5.3; cf. Herodian, *Imperial History after Marcus* 1.2.3.
 35. Fray Antonio de Guevara, *Libro áureo del emperador Marco Aurelio*, first published (in a pirate edition) at Seville in 1528.

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CHAPTER 8

Early Life

Family, Youth, and Education

Anthony R. Birley

1. Family

Marcus Aurelius was born on April 26, 121, in the family mansion on the Caelian Hill at Rome. For the first 17 years of his life he had the same names as his father and grandfather, Marcus Annii Verus. The latter was consul for the second time that year and prefect of the city of Rome; five years later he was to hold the consulship again, a sign of his exceptional status under Hadrian. A third consulship, as *ordinarius*, for a non-member of the imperial family was a great rarity; previous holders had all been the closest ally of their respective emperors.¹ The Annii came from the Caesarian *colonia* Ucbi (modern Espejo) in Baetica. Verus, like Trajan and Hadrian part of the ‘colonial elite’, was married to Rupilia Faustina, daughter of Libo Rupilius Frugi, and thus a descendant of great Republican houses – the Pompeii, Licinii Crassi, Calpurnii Pisones, and Scribonii Libones (Birley (1987) 28ff., 232ff.).

The marriages of Verus’ children enhanced the family’s standing further. One daughter-in-law, Marcus’ mother, was Domitia Lucilla, a great heiress, daughter of P. Calvisius Tullus Ruso and granddaughter of the immensely wealthy Domitius Tullus (Birley (1987) 245f.).² Marcus is said by Cassius Dio to have been favored by Hadrian among other reasons ‘because of his kinship’ (Dio 69.21.2, cf. 71[72].35.3). A supposed ancestor was a legendary king, ‘Malemnius, son of Dasummus, founder of Lupiae’ (*HA Marcus* 1.6). Through his mother Marcus was perhaps indirectly related to Hadrian, as her grandmother seems to have been a Dasumia, from a Corduba family linked to Hadrian (Birley (1987) 245f.). A daughter of Verus, Annia Galeria Faustina,

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was married to T. Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Arrius Antoninus, the future emperor, another member of the ‘colonial elite’: the Aurelii Fulvi came from Nemausus (Nîmes) in Narbonensis. His grandfather and father, both called T. Aurelius Fulvus, had had distinguished careers under the Flavians, while his maternal grandfather, Cn. Arrius Antoninus, had been consul twice, in 69 and 97 (Birley (1987) 242f.).

After his father’s early death, Marcus was adopted and brought up by his grandfather. But another man also played an important part in supervising his upbringing, Lucius Catilius Severus. Marcus apparently bore the names Catilius Severus for some years in addition to his original names (*HA Marcus* 1.9–10). Catilius had probably married the widow of Marcus’ great-grandfather Domitius Tullus, and thus became his great-grandfather or step-great-grandfather (Birley (1987) 33, 245). Marcus later remembered Catilius with gratitude: thanks to him he ‘did not attend public places of teaching but had good teachers at home’ (*Meditations* 1.4). Catilius, from a colonial family of Italian origin in Bithynia, had been a friend of the Younger Pliny. In Trajan’s Parthian War he was governor of Cappadocia and Greater Armenia. Hadrian had made him governor of Syria in succession to himself in 117 and he then had a second consulship in 120, as colleague of Aurelius Antoninus in 120 (Halfmann (1979) 133ff.).

Marcus had a great many teachers. Before beginning regular lessons, as a small boy he had a ‘governor’ (*educator* or *tropheus*), whose name is not preserved, but whom he remembered affectionately for teaching him to work hard, have few wants, mind his own business and ignore slander, and not to be a fan of charioteers or gladiators (*Meditations* 1.5). His earliest elementary teachers were Euphorio, probably a Greek freedman, and an actor called Geminus (*HA Marcus* 2.2), both otherwise unknown.

In 127, aged six, unusually young, he was enrolled into the *equites* on Hadrian’s nomination. The next year, again through the emperor, he was enrolled into the priestly college of the Salii. Qualifications for membership were patrician birth and to have both parents living. In Marcus’ case the second qualification was lacking, since his father was dead. Perhaps Hadrian laid down that adoption by his grandfather met the requirements. The Salii, as the name indicates, were dancing priests, associated with the god Mars. Twice a year they played a prominent part in religious ceremonies which marked the opening and close of the campaigning season. Marcus took his duties very seriously, as leader of the dance, prophet and master, and learning the archaic formulas by heart (Birley (1987) 36f.).

2. Early Education

No further details of his earliest years are recorded. When he approached his 12th year he would be ready for secondary education with *grammatici*.

In his case two further teachers are mentioned, the first, Andro, being ‘a geometrician and musician’, the second a painting-master, Diognetus (*HA Marcus* 2.2, 4.9). Marcus early on ‘took a passionate interest in philosophy’ and at 11

began his studies wearing the *pallium* [the philosopher’s traditional rough cloak] and sleeping on the ground, although he reluctantly, at his mother’s insistence, lay on a little couch strewn with skins. (*HA Marcus* 2.6)

He later recalled that he been inspired to this regime by Diognetus, who was clearly more than a painting teacher. He also taught him

to avoid passing enthusiasms; to distrust the stories of miracle-workers and impostors about incantations and exorcism of spirits and such like; not to go cock-fighting or to get excited about such sports; to put up with outspokenness; and to become familiar with philosophy; to hear first the lectures of Bacceius, then of Tandasis and Marcianus; to write philosophical dialogues in my boyhood; to aspire to the camp-bed and the skin coverlet and the other things which belong to the Greek training. (*Meditations* 1.6)

Three ‘grammarians’ are mentioned in the *HA*, two for Latin and one for Greek. The two Latin masters were Trosius Aper, from Pola in Istria, and Tuticius Proculus, from Sicca Veneria in Africa (for both the text of *HA Marcus* 2.3 has to be slightly emended). The Greek teacher, Alexander of Cotiaeum in the province of Asia, advised Marcus not to be pedantic or critical about other people’s grammatical mistakes, but to use the right phrase oneself by way of an answer (*Meditations* 1.10); the Latin *grammatici* are not mentioned in the *Meditations*. Alexander was a well-known literary figure, the leading authority on Homer, and also taught Aelius Aristides, one of the best-known orators of the Antonine period. If an inscription from Sicca refers to this Proculus, he was later made a senator and became proconsul.

‘In his fifteenth year’ Marcus took the *toga virilis*, probably on March 17, 136, shortly before his fifteenth birthday, and ‘was at once betrothed, at Hadrian’s wish, to the daughter of Lucius [Ceionius] Commodus’, a neopatrician, one of the *consules ordinarii* that year. Soon after the betrothal Marcus became ‘prefect of the city during the Latin festival’, held every April at the site of Alba Longa. Since the consuls, with all other magistrates, had to attend, they appointed a deputy, as ‘city prefect’. On this hypothesis, Lucius Commodus chose his future son-in-law, who ‘conducted himself brilliantly when acting on behalf of the magistrates and at the banquets of the emperor Hadrian’ (*HA Marcus* 4.6).

The childless Hadrian’s health now failing, he felt obliged to nominate a successor by adopting a son. There was general surprise and indignation

among the elite when the name was announced: the consul Commodus, now renamed L. Aelius Caesar and designated to a second consulship for 137. He was then dispatched with proconsular *imperium* to govern both Pannonian provinces. Contemporaries were baffled by Hadrian's choice. The *HA* alleged that Aelius Caesar's 'sole recommendation was his beauty' (*HA Hadrianus* 23.10ff.).³ One modern scholar even tried to prove – but with flawed evidence – that the man was Hadrian's bastard. The truth is probably simpler: Hadrian wanted Marcus eventually to succeed him, but he was too young. An intermediate successor was needed, hence the betrothal of Marcus and Aelius Caesar's daughter. As the Caesar was in poor health – he was 'coughing blood' – he was presumably not expected to survive Hadrian for long. His own son was at most only six or seven; but his intended son-in-law Marcus would within a few years be ready to take power. Such seems to have been the calculation (Birley (1987) 42ff.).

Aelius Caesar returned to Rome after less than a year in Pannonia, and was due to speak in the senate on 1 January 138, but fell ill the night before and died from 'a hemorrhage'. Hadrian forbade public mourning but waited for three weeks, until his 62nd birthday, January 24, before announcing a new heir. Now seriously ill, he summoned a group of senior senators to his residence. After praising the adoptive principle, he explained that since heaven had taken his first choice,

I have found an emperor for you in his place...a man who is noble, mild, tractable and prudent, neither young enough to act rashly nor old enough to be neglectful, brought up according to the laws, with experience of authority practised in our traditional manner, not ignorant of any matters involving the exercise of imperial power, but well able to deal with them all. (Dio 69.20)

Then he revealed the name: Aurelius Antoninus.

Hadrian knew that Antoninus had no ambition to hold the imperial power, but was confident that he would in the end accept. Antoninus asked for time to consider, but after four weeks consented and was formally adopted on February 25. Following Hadrian's wishes, Antoninus was in turn obliged to adopt both his wife's nephew Marcus and Aelius Caesar's son Lucius; and Lucius was betrothed to Antoninus' daughter Faustina. Marcus now became Marcus Aurelius Verus Caesar; his adoptive brother Lucius Aurelius Commodus, without the title Caesar – which Antoninus never granted him. A two-tier succession system, surely already planned in 136 with Aelius Caesar and Marcus, was now explicitly in place. The model was Augustus' arrangement in summer AD 4, when he adopted Tiberius, who was required to adopt Germanicus, evidently with the intention that the latter should rule jointly, after Tiberius' death, with Tiberius' own son Drusus (Birley (1987) 46ff.).

Hadrian is assumed initially to have regarded as his heir Pedanius Fuscus, son-in-law of his sister Domitia Paulina and her husband Julius Servianus. Hadrian had shared the consulship with Fuscus in 118. But Fuscus and his wife Julia Paulina thereafter disappear from the record; they evidently died young, leaving a son, also called Pedanius Fuscus, to be brought up by his grandparents. Hadrian had either not foreseen or did not care how his grand-nephew Pedanius Fuscus, now aged 24, would react to the choice of yet another heir rather than himself. Clearly feeling that he had been robbed of his birthright, he attempted a coup and was put to death. His grandfather, old Servianus, was forced to take his own life (*HA Hadrianus* 15.8, 23.3; for the date, Heilen (2005) 53, correcting Birley (1987) 41f., and others).

As well as to Fuscus and Servianus, the adoption of Antoninus 'caused pain to many, especially to Catilius Severus, the prefect of the city, who had designs on the imperial power himself'; he was removed from office. Linked with Catilius elsewhere in the *HA Hadrianus* are Ummidius Quadratus and Marcius Turbo, the long-serving Guard Prefect: all three were 'assailed harshly' by Hadrian. Catilius' family connection with Marcus was mentioned above. Ummidius may have been married to another aunt of Marcus; his son was in due course to marry Marcus' sister Annia Cornificia. Both Catilius and Ummidius possessed far greater experience of provinces and armies than Antoninus, who had had no military service at all and had only once governed a province – for one year, as proconsul of Asia. It may be inferred that each man, one perhaps supported by Marcius Turbo, had seen himself as a better qualified 'place-holder' to keep the throne warm for Hadrian's favorite Marcus (Birley (1987) 47ff.).

On the night of his adoption Marcus dreamed that he had shoulders of ivory, and when asked if they could bear a burden, he discovered that they were very much stronger than before. Reluctantly he moved from his mother's house on the Caelian to Hadrian's private house (not yet, evidently, to the 'Tiberian House', the imperial residence on the Palatine). 'When members of his household asked why he was sorry to be adopted into the imperial family, he listed the evils that the imperial power contained in itself', the biographer records. He gives an attractive picture of Marcus' habits at this time:

he was so good-natured that he allowed himself to be taken, at times, to hunt or to the theatre or to the spectacles. He loved boxing, wrestling, running and fowling. He played the ball-game well and hunted well too. But zeal for philosophy led him away from all these pursuits and made him serious and reserved. Still, this did not spoil the friendliness in him, which he showed to his household and his friends, and even to those less well known to him. He was austere, but not unreasonable, modest but not inactive, reserved but not gloomy.

In another passage there are revealing comments on Marcus' high-mindedness:

he had such a high regard for his reputation, that even as a boy he used to warn his procurators not to do anything in a high-handed fashion. He also often refused legacies that were left to him, returning them to the next of kin. (*HA Marcus* 5.2–4, 4.8–10, 7.1)

Antoninus was only 10 years younger than Hadrian, but in the event reigned for nearly 23 years, and Marcus' reign lasted more than 18: Hadrian had thus determined the succession for 42 years. After his death, on July 10, 138, Antoninus' acceptance went through smoothly, the only difficulty being his insistence, against the senate's wishes, on having Hadrian deified. His loyalty (*pietas*) to the memory of his adoptive father was no doubt the real reason for his acquiring the additional name Pius – by which he will be referred to in what follows. As one of his first actions, Pius set aside the betrothals arranged by Hadrian, of his daughter Faustina to the young Lucius – both then only about seven or eight – and of Marcus to Lucius' sister, Ceionia Fabia. Pius had first asked Marcus if he agreed; betrothal to his little cousin Faustina meant waiting seven years before he could marry (Birley (1987) 53ff.).

In 139 Marcus entered the senate as quaestor and was also appointed *princeps iuventutis*; it made a good impression, Dio says, that in this capacity 'he entered the Forum with the rest (of the *equites*), although he was a Caesar' (Dio 71 [72].35.5). Many years later Marcus told himself: 'See that you do not turn into a Caesar, do not be dipped in the purple dye' (*Meditations* 6.30). He now had to move into the imperial residence on the Palatine. His dislike of this is a recurrent theme in the *Meditations*. But his adoptive father

was able to rid me of all my pride and make me realise that one can live in a palace without needing bodyguards, embroidered clothing, torches, statues and such pomp, but can live very nearly as a private citizen, without thereby losing any dignity or being less active in the state duties required of a *princeps*. (*Meditations* 1.17.3)

The next year, now eighteen, he was consul with Pius.

By the time of his adoption Marcus had begun the study of oratory and now acquired a law tutor as well, the jurist L. Volusius Maecianus (who wrote a handbook for his pupil, partly preserved, on the Roman coinage system, the *Distributio*) (*HA Marcus* 6.5; Pflaum (1961) no. 141). He had three Greek tutors in oratory, Herodes Atticus, the Athenian 'millionaire', Caninius Celer, who had been Hadrian's Chief Secretary (*ab epistulis*), and Aninius Macer, otherwise unknown (*HA Marcus* 2.4). Herodes was a senator and son of a senator. Indeed, his father, the elder Atticus, had been consul a few years

earlier, probably in 133 (*RMD* no. 159). Herodes himself achieved even higher status, becoming consul *ordinarius* in 143. His oratorical abilities were lightly acquired: ‘no man ever found it easier to learn than he did’, according to Philostratus.

He did not neglect hard work, but he used to study while drinking wine, and at night, in periods of insomnia. Hence he was called ‘The Stuffed Orator’ by the lazy and small-minded. He was a restrained speaker, whose speciality was subtlety rather than vigorous attack. His language was pleasing, full of metaphors, and graceful. (Philostratus, *Vitae sophistarum* 2.1.1, 4–5, 8ff., 14)

But it is probable that Herodes did not begin tutoring Marcus until later.

His only tutor in Latin oratory was M. Cornelius Fronto, from Cirta in Numidia, regarded in antiquity as a second Cicero. Apart from a few fragments of his speeches, the only writings of his that survive are his letters, notably a good many of those to Marcus. These hardly support the comparison with Cicero, but they and of course Marcus’ replies do offer precious insight into Marcus’ life over the next quarter of a century. Various anecdotes in the *Attic Nights* of Aulus Gellius give attractive snapshots of Fronto’s role as the great authority on Latin language and style. He and his contemporaries looked back for inspiration to early days of Latin literature, Ennius, the Elder Cato, Plautus, Terence, and Gaius Gracchus, as well as to Sallust (Champlin (1980)).

In a very long early letter Fronto laid down some principles.

In all the arts, I think, complete inexperience and ignorance are better than half-experience and half-knowledge. For a man who realises that he knows nothing of some art will attempt less, and consequently is less likely to come to grief; in fact, diffidence prevents rashness. But when someone ostentatiously pretends to have mastered something of which he merely has a superficial knowledge, he makes mistakes of all kinds because of his false confidence. They say that it is better never to have touched the teaching of philosophy, as well, than to have tasted it superficially, with the edge of the lips, as the saying is, and that those who enter the corridors of some art and turn aside before they have penetrated within, turn out the most perfidious.

Whereas in other arts one might be able to get away with it for a time, ‘in the choice and arrangement of words the ignorant are shown up at once’. He went on to single out Cato and his imitator Sallust and a number of early poets for their success in ‘seeking out words with real industry’. As to Cicero,

famed as the head and fount of Roman eloquence, he used the most beautiful language on occasion and was magnificent, above all other orators, in embellishing what he wished to set forth.

But Fronto concluded that the great man had failed to make the effort to search out words (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.3 = vdH² 56,5–57,11).

Fronto and his painting-master Diognetus are the only non-philosophers among his teachers and mentors included in Book 1 of the *Meditations*, in which Marcus listed all those of his relations, teachers and friends from whom he had benefited. Hadrian is conspicuous by his absence from this company. Fronto is thanked, not for his lessons in rhetoric, but for having taught Marcus

to be aware of the envy and duplicity and dissimulation that are habitual to a tyrant; and that as a rule those among us who are called patricians are in a way lacking in natural affection. (1.11)

Marcus' expression of gratitude to the memory of Pius (1.16) is far and away the longest. He had earlier composed a brief tribute (6.30.2), telling himself to do 'everything as a pupil of Antoninus'. He recalled his

constancy, equability, piety, serenity of expression, sweet nature, contempt for empty fame, determination to understand issues and never to dismiss a question until he had scrutinised it thoroughly. He never found fault with his critics, was never in a hurry, refused to listen to slander... His wants were modest, for lodging, dress, food or servants... he was always loyal to his friends, he revered the gods but was not superstitious. May you be as much at peace with your conscience as he was when your last hour comes.

The fuller version in Book 1 expands this appreciation and adds among other points Antoninus' high appreciation of true philosophers and his readiness to acknowledge without jealousy the excellence of those with special gifts in public speaking, law, ethics, or any other subject (the contrast with the jealous polymath Hadrian is obvious); also that he was loyal to traditional Roman political practice – without parading the fact. Marcus reveals here that Antoninus was a sufferer from violent headaches, probably migraines, but that when they were gone he returned to work with his usual energy; and that he had very few secrets, and these only concerned affairs of state.

The content of many of the early letters between Fronto and Marcus concerns literature and exercises that Marcus had been set. But some of Marcus' letters give an insight into his family life: a visit to the ancient town of Anagnia to look at the monuments and temples; being mistaken for sheep-stealers and chased away by shepherds when out riding in the hills; hunting for boar or helping with the vintage.

Marcus managed to keep at his books when in the country for the vintage.

Today by a careful arrangement of meal-times I worked from the ninth hour of the night until the second hour of the day. From then until the third I walked

about in my slippers outside my bedroom in a happy frame of mind. Then I put on my boots and my cloak, for we had been told to come in that dress, and went to greet my lord. We heard that boars had been taken but were not lucky enough to see it. Still, we climbed quite a steep hill, and in the afternoon came home, I to my books. I took off my boots and lay on my bed for nearly two hours reading Cato's speech *On the Property of Pulchra*, and another one in which he impeached a tribune. 'Ho!' you will cry out to your boy, 'go as fast as you can and bring me those speeches from the Libraries of Apollo'. It is no use you sending for them, for those volumes as well have followed me here. So you must get round the Palace Librarian – a small bribe will be necessary, which he and I can share when I come back to the city! Well, when I had read these speeches I wrote out a little miserable stuff which I ought to dedicate to the gods of water and fire. Really, I have been unlucky in my writing today. That was definitely the little bit of work by one of the huntsmen or vintagers, one of those whose songs are resounding through my bedroom, a noise quite as hateful and tiresome as the pleaders in the law-courts. What did I say? No, it's all right, my master is an orator, not just a pleader! I think I must have got a chill, either from walking about in my slippers this morning or from writing badly, I don't know which. Certainly I am quite full of rheum anyway and today I am drivelling more than ever. So I will rub some oil on my head and go off to sleep – I'm not going to pour a drop of oil on my lamp tonight, I'm so worn out from my riding and sneezing. Farewell, my dearest and sweetest master, whom I would rather see than Rome itself, dare I say! (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.5 = vdH² 61,5–62,7)

Early in the 140s an exchange of letters took a more serious turn. Marcus was alarmed to learn that Fronto was to appear as defense counsel for a prominent Athenian, Tiberius Claudius Demonstratus, who was being prosecuted by Herodes Atticus. The prospect of two of his friends on opposite sides in court led him to write to Fronto, asking him to exercise restraint and not to attack Herodes too strenuously, an obvious strategy for the defense, considering that Herodes was a controversial figure at Athens. In particular, there was serious ill-feeling against him there because he had prevented the people of the city receiving a benefaction in his father's will. Marcus recalled that Herodes

was brought up in the house of my grandfather Publius Calvisius, so for this reason I am most anxious that this hateful business should be handled as honorably as possible. I hope that you will approve my advice, for you must commend my goodwill. I would certainly rather make a fool of myself by writing than fail in friendship by not saying anything.

Fronto's reply was generous, although it was an awkward situation for him. He had not realized that Herodes was a friend, at first sight a surprising comment. But rather than suppose that Fronto was being disingenuous, it is

likelier that Marcus had not yet begun to receive coaching in Greek oratory from Herodes. Fronto went on:

No doubt I ought not to say anything that might harm Herodes which does not bear on the case itself. But the facts of the case are undoubtedly frightful: how am I to deal with them?

He outlined some of the serious allegations against Herodes. Another letter followed soon after, in which Fronto added that he was not the only man appearing for the defense, and mentioned three other names (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.2–4 = vdH² 36,1–38,10).

The outcome of the trial is unknown. Fronto's speech *Pro Demonstrato* was published at some stage (Fronto, *Ad Antoninum imperatorem* 3.4.1 = vdH² 102,9–19); but this does not necessarily mean that his client was acquitted. At any rate, Demonstratus continued his hostility to Herodes for the next 30 years or more, but the millionaire intellectual retained his dominant position at Athens. His authority at Athens was doubtless helped by his high standing at Rome, as son of a consul, and consul himself in 143, as *ordinarius*, giving his name to the year. Herodes' honor is not mentioned in the correspondence between Fronto and Marcus. By contrast Fronto's own consulship, a few months before Herodes, albeit only as suffect consul, in July and August 142, is referred to by both Marcus and by Fronto himself repeatedly. Fronto was clearly the first member of his family to enter the senate. Hence he was lucky to hold the office at all, especially as he had not served in the army or governed a province, as he conceded when he asked Marcus, in a joking way, what he had done to deserve Marcus' affection:

What benefit has Fronto conferred on you that you have such affection for him? Has he given his life for you or for your parents? Has he undergone dangers in your place? Has he successfully administered some province? Has he commanded an army? None of these things.

Fronto had asked to see Marcus' verses. 'You very kindly ask for my hexameters', Marcus wrote,

and I would have sent them at once if I had them with me. But my secretary, whom you know, I mean Anicetus, did not send any of my writings with me when I set off. He knows my weakness and was afraid that if I got hold of them I should do as usual and put them in the furnace. Actually, those particular hexameters were in almost no danger, for, to tell my master the truth, I am fond of them. (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 2.8.2 = vdH² 28, 19–24)

Fronto delivered his speech of thanks to Pius in the senate on 13 August 142 and mentioned this briefly at the start of a letter, adding that 'our friend

Aufidius' would tell Marcus more about the applause. Aufidius Victorinus was a fellow-pupil, who was later to marry Fronto's only daughter, and a lifelong friend of Marcus. Most of the letter was a discourse on oratory.

The supreme quality of an orator, and hard to reach, is to please an audience without sacrificing correct eloquence. He should offer stimulating, colourful language to appeal to the public without any great or excessive sacrifice of dignity... You and your father, who are obliged to wear purple and crimson, must sometimes clothe your words in similar dress, but will do so with restraint and moderation in the best possible way. For this is what I foretell: whatever has been achieved in eloquence will be fulfilled by you, so great is your natural capacity and so keenly do you study and practise.

After further remarks on these lines he added: 'For by now I do not deal with you as if I thought you were twenty-two years old' – as the words *te duos et viginti annos natum* were always translated, from which it was inferred, as Marcus was born in 121, that the letter and Fronto's consulship could be dated to summer 143. New evidence in the form of military diplomas has shown that Fronto was actually consul in 142, hence the words in fact mean 'in your twenty-second year'.⁴ At this age, Fronto went on, he himself had 'scarcely touched any of the ancient writings', whereas Marcus has

made such progress in eloquence as would bring glory to older men, and, what is extremely difficult, in every branch – for your letters, which you write so regularly, are enough to show me what you can do in that more relaxed and 'Tullian' [Ciceronian] style.

Fronto mentioned that Victorinus was going to bring back Marcus' verses,

the paper being carefully sown with thread to prevent that little mouse poking his nose in anywhere. For he himself has never told me anything about your hexameters, so evil and malicious is he – he says that you recite them on purpose so quickly and fluently that he cannot memorise them. Hence I have paid him back in kind, so that he won't hear a single line. I remember, anyway, that you have frequently warned me not to show your verses to anyone.

Perhaps as a result of this embargo, no poetry by Marcus has survived. After expressing the hope that Marcus was cheerful and well – with no repetition of 'the bad fright you gave us on your birthday' (about which no information survives) – he added that he was enclosing a letter to Marcus' mother, Domitia Lucilla, written in Greek. Unlike Marcus' verses, this is preserved in the correspondence (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 2.2.1–9 = vdH² 17,16–21,16; 2.3 = vdH² 21,17–24,13).

Another of Marcus' letters from the time of Fronto's consulship describes the imperial family's doings at Naples.

Marcus Aurelius Caesar to his own consul and master, greeting. Since I last wrote there has been nothing worth writing about or that you would be particularly pleased to know. For we have spent more or less whole days in the same activities – the same theatre, the same dislike for it, the same longing for you. What? – do I say the same? I mean a longing that is renewed and increased every day, and, as Laberius says about love, in his own fashion and his own special style: 'Your love grows as fast as an onion, as firm as a palm.' What he says about love applies to my longing. I want to write a longer letter to you, but there is nothing to write about. But wait, I have thought of something. We have been listening to official speeches in our honour here. The speakers are Greeks, of course, but amazing creatures, as far removed from Greek literature as my own Caelian Hill from the land of Greece – so much so that I could even rival Theopompus (for I hear that he is the most eloquent of the Greeks), in comparison with them. So these people, whose 'ignorance', as Caecilius says, 'is assured', have almost driven me, mortal that I am, to write in Greek.

He ends by comparing the weather at Naples to that at Laurentum, Lanuvium, Algidus, Tusculum, Puteoli, and Tibur (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 2.11 = vdH² 30, 14–31, 16).

Because his duties as consul obliged him to stay in Rome, Fronto could not attend Domitia Lucilla's birthday party at Naples. Instead, his wife Cratia was there and Fronto had to write to Lucilla to congratulate her, again in flowery Greek (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 2.13, 2.15 = vdH² 32–33). Fronto's brother (Quintus Cornelius Quadratus) also spent two days at Naples (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 2.12 = vdH² 31, 21–24). When his two months, 'bound with golden fetters' to meetings of the senate, ended, Fronto could travel to Naples, where his wife and little daughter, also called Cratia, were still staying at the imperial residence, as Marcus mentioned in a letter written two days before Fronto's arrival. The next day he wrote again, briefly, mentioning that he had been listening to lawyers all day, and wishing 'the coming night to be the shortest ever . . . so that I may see you the sooner' (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 2.17.1, 2.18 = vdH² 34, 16–23, 35, 5–8).

Not long after this Fronto delivered a speech in the lawcourts, which was highly praised. He sent the text to Marcus, who declaimed passages from it to Pius and told Fronto that the emperor had been very impressed. Fronto was delighted: it pleased him more than his consulship that something he had composed should be performed by Marcus with Pius as audience. At the end of his own letter Marcus mentioned that Herodes had suffered the death of a newborn son, and asked Fronto to write a letter of condolence. This he duly

did, in Greek, and the letter has survived. At the end of it he urged Herodes that

if you too love a certain noble youth, distinguished for virtue and education and fortune and prudence, you will not go wrong if you attach yourself to him and set all your assurance of good things on him. For as long as he is there for us – and I confess I am a rival for his love – everything else can be remedied and is a long way second in importance.

Marcus was grateful that the two men who had been at odds with each other were thus reconciled. He ended the letter ‘in a hurry, because Maecianus is pressing’. This was Marcus’ law tutor, the jurist Volusius Maecianus (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 1.6–7.2 = vdH² 10,1–14,17; 2.1 = vdH² 16, 10–17; 4.2.3–5 = vdH² 55,15–23).

None of the letters refers to Marcus’ marriage to Faustina, which took place in April 145, when Marcus held a second consulship. The *Fasti Ostienses* reveal that their first child, a daughter, Domitia Faustina, was born on 30 November 147, and that on the next day Marcus was granted tribunician power and *imperium*, while his wife became Augusta. This daughter, who was to die in 151, was the first of numerous children. Short-lived twin boys followed in 149 and further daughters in 150 and 151 – these two girls, Annia Aurelia Galeria Lucilla and Annia Galeria Aurelia Faustina, survived to adulthood and marriage, as did two more daughters, born in 159, Fadilla, and 160, Cornificia. Two further sons had died shortly after birth, in 152 and 157. The first reference to Faustina in the letters after the marriage refers to her being ill. Later letters frequently mention the children. Meanwhile Marcus’ studies with Fronto had become a little desultory, to judge from some letters evidently written after his marriage – since he passes on greetings from ‘My lady’ rather than from ‘My mother’. Domitia Lucilla seems to have lived until about AD 156 (Birley (1987) 245ff. on the family).

Marcus was apparently finding the exercises set by Fronto – writing imaginary speeches for different sides in historical cases – a rather barren occupation. He had been visited by Aufidius Victorinus, who ‘would rather win praise as a judge than as an orator’. Victorinus, who was to become consul in 155, was probably holding the praetorship that year. The inferred date, 145, accords with Marcus’ comment later in the letter, that ‘your pupil is angry with himself, because in his twenty-fifth year he has still not drunk in any draught of noble doctrines and purer principles.’ Perhaps on Maecianus’ recommendation he had been studying law books and had put off writing to Fronto and working on the subject he had set.

As some Attic orator once warned the Athenian assembly, ‘the laws must be allowed to sleep sometimes’, so I will propitiate Aristo’s book and allow them to rest for a little while. (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.13 = vdH² 67,16–68,14)

The Aristo mentioned by Marcus was probably the Trajanic jurist Titius Aristo, rather than the Hellenistic philosopher Ariston of Chios. All the same, this letter probably marked the point at which Marcus' formal education with Fronto, and indeed with other tutors, came to an end (Birley (1987) 275 n. 13). From his intended father-in-law Aelius Caesar Marcus had already acquired his first philosophy tutor, Apollonius of Chalcedon (*HA Marcus* 2.7, emended by Obrecht), a Stoic, whose lectures he continued to attend after entering the imperial family. In due course 'he also attended lectures by Sextus of Chaeronea (Plutarch's nephew), Junius Rusticus, Claudius Maximus, and Cinna Catulus, all Stoics'. It was Rusticus, in whose infancy his father of the same name, the Stoic 'martyr', had been executed by Domitian in 93, whom Marcus 'especially revered and followed' (*HA Marcus* 2.7–3.5). He later thanked the gods that he 'had got to know Apollonius, Rusticus and Maximus' (*Meditations* 1.17.4). Another philosophic mentor was the Peripatetic Claudius Severus, whose son was to marry Marcus' daughter Annia Faustina.

The correspondence between Marcus and Fronto from these years mainly concerns family news, not least about illness. Fronto's fondness for his pupil is repeatedly stressed and one further passage deserves quotation:

You know that in all the banks, shops, taverns, eaves, colonnades and windows, everywhere, portraits of you are exposed to public view, badly painted for the most part and modelled or carved in a plain, not to say worthless, style. All the same, your likeness, however unlike you, never meets my eyes without making me part my lips in a smile... (Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.12.6 = vdH² 66,24–67,4). (Further correspondence from the first years of Marcus' reign is quoted in Chapter 9 in this volume.)

NOTES

1. Under Augustus, M. Agrippa (27 BC); Claudius, L. Vitellius (AD 47); Nerva, L. Verginius Rufus (97); Trajan, Sex. Julius Frontinus and L. Julius Ursus (100); L. Licinius Sura (107). Only one other man achieved this, L. Julius Ursus Servianus, Hadrian's brother-in-law, in 134; not long after this the old man was forced to suicide. Verus was still alive and influential in 138.
2. The theory of G. di Vita-Evrard (1989) 165ff., that Domitia Lucilla was the half-sister of Hadrian's mother, Domitia Paulina, although widely accepted, particularly by Francophone scholars, and also by Fündling (2006) 234, 237f. and (2008) 16f., lacks proof.
3. The *HA* (followed by many modern writers) mistakenly calls Aelius Caesar 'Aelius Verus'. But he was never called Verus, and his son only took the name when becoming emperor in 161.
4. One diploma was first published by Eck and Roxan (1995) 55ff.; the implications for Fronto were discussed again by Eck (1998); it was included in *RMD*

IV as no. 264; and another diploma of the same issue is now in *RMD V* (2006), no. 392.

FURTHER READING

The biographies in the *Historia Augusta*, abbreviated here *HA* (on which cf. Further Reading and References for Chapter 1 in this volume), are cited here by the name of their subject, e.g. *Marcus, Verus, Avidius Cassius*, etc. But Marcus' adoptive brother, later as emperor known as Lucius Verus, is generally referred to here as Lucius, rather than Verus, to avoid confusion with various Roman senators called Verus. There is full coverage of the topics in chapters 8 and 9 in Birley (1987), requiring modification in particular regarding the date of Fronto's consulship (now known to have been in AD 142 not 143), for which see Eck (1998). On Fronto see especially the monograph by Champlin (1980). Fronto's *Letters* are cited according to the most recent edition, by van den Hout (1988), abbreviated in the text as vdH², followed by page and line number, as well as by the division into groups in the MSS. Unfortunately the text in the bilingual Loeb edition by Haines (1919) is seriously defective, although his translations are still helpful (van den Hout (1988) 295f. has a useful concordance with Haines' edition). Birley (2000) was composed in 1988 and only a few corrections were possible before publication. Birley (1997) on Hadrian offers more detail on Marcus' adoption by Antoninus Pius. On Marcus' marriage with Faustina see Weiss (2008). On Marcus' legislation see Williams (1976). Klein (1979) reprints a selection of articles on Marcus Aurelius, of varying quality. For the most recent biography of Marcus see Fündling (2008), also his valuable paper (2009) on Lucius Verus.

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CHAPTER 9

Marcus' Life as Emperor

Anthony R. Birley

1. Co-Emperor with Lucius Verus, AD 161–69

On March 7, 161, Antoninus Pius died at the age of 75. His death seems to have come quickly, three days after he contracted a sudden fever (for what follows Birley (1987) 116ff.). 'While delirious, he spoke of nothing except the commonwealth and the kings with whom he was angry.' He died at his Lorium estate, his final watchword to the Guard being 'Equanimity' (*HA Antoninus Pius* 12.4–7). His adoptive sons Marcus and Lucius were consuls that year, perhaps in anticipation of Pius' passing. Marcus had been effectively deputy-emperor for over 13 years. He had *imperium* and tribunician power, and lacked only the name Augustus and the position of *pontifex maximus* to become emperor. But at the first meeting of the Senate he refused to accept the position unless equal powers were conferred on Lucius. Clearly Marcus' sense of duty led him to implement Hadrian's intention that the two should rule jointly. Pius had set aside the betrothal between Lucius and Faustina, and Lucius had 'remained a private citizen for twenty-three years'. He now acquired tribunician power and *imperium*. He and Marcus both became Augustus and altered their other names. In tribute to Pius Marcus replaced Verus with Antoninus, and Lucius became Verus instead of Commodus. They were to reign as 'Marcus Aurelius Antoninus' and 'Lucius Aurelius Verus'. The changes led to confusion in several sources. There were thus co-emperors for the first time, like most Roman innovations one for which there was ample precedent, notably the ancient twin magistracy, the consulate. Of course, Marcus had more *auctoritas*, 'authority', an at first sight intangible but nonetheless measurable factor in Roman public life. He had been consul one more time than Lucius, he had held tribunician power and *imperium* for many years and was now *pontifex*

maximus, an indivisible post; Lucius was only *pontifex* (*HA Marcus* 7.6–7; *HA Verus* 4.1).

After the senate meeting, they went to the camp of the praetorian guard. Lucius addressed the troops on behalf of both, and they were duly acclaimed as *imperator*. They promised a bounty to the troops, 20 000 *sesterces* (5 000 *denarii*) per man, more for officers. This expensive ceremony was now a necessary opening to every reign. The enormous size of the donative, equivalent to several years' pay, may seem excessive, considering that the new rulers were unopposed, but presumably a double accession was thought to require exceptional generosity (*HA Marcus* 7.9; *HA Verus* 4.3).

Their next public act was the funeral and deification of Pius, whose remains were laid to rest in Hadrian's mausoleum, which now housed the ashes of several other members of the family as well as its builder. Marcus and Lucius now each became 'son of the deified Antoninus'. A college of priests, *sodales*, was founded, drawn from a handful of high-ranking senators, to carry out appropriate ceremonies. The temple which Pius had built for his deified wife was now rededicated to the Deified Antoninus and Faustina. Another decision looked to the future of the family: Marcus' eldest surviving daughter, the 11-year-old Lucilla, was betrothed to Lucius, who was well over twice her age. Marcus had married at 24, by no means early for a Roman: he probably had to wait until his bride was old enough. Perhaps this betrothal had been long planned, although it is ironic that Lucius had originally, as a small boy, been betrothed, at Hadrian's wish, to Lucilla's mother Faustina; the arrangement had been set aside by Pius after Hadrian's death.

Faustina was three months into yet another pregnancy when Marcus became emperor. On August 31 she gave birth at Lanuvium to twin sons. They were named after their late grandfather and their adoptive uncle: T. Aurelius Fulvus Antoninus and L. Aurelius Commodus – the latter the name that Lucius had just replaced by Verus. The event was duly celebrated on the coinage. This was the ninth time that she had given birth. She had already borne twin sons 12 years earlier, but they had both died in infancy, as had two other sons and a daughter. Four daughters survived, Lucilla and her sisters Annia Galeria Aurelia Faustina, Fadilla and Cornificia (for the children Birley (1987) 247f.).

Marcus and Lucius behaved *civiliter*, like 'fellow-citizens', which was popular with the *plebs*, and freedom of speech was allowed: a writer of comedies, Marullus, was unscathed after open criticism (*HA Marcus* 8.1). Fronto was delighted that his former pupils were co-emperors. Marcus told Fronto that he had been re-reading the latter's panegyric of Pius, delivered in 142. Fronto wrote back that 'as to the praises of yourself in that speech, . . . you then showed rare natural ability', which he now saw to have become 'perfected excellence . . . The hope has become reality' (*Ad Antoninum imp.* 4.2.4 = vdH² 106, 8ff.).

To Lucius he expressed his gratitude that the brothers, in spite of their high position, still showed him warm feelings (*Ad Verum imp.* 1.12.2 = vdH² 115, 19ff.).

Marcus had initially 'given himself wholly to philosophy and to seeking the affection of his fellow-citizens', and continued to attend lectures, notably those by Sextus of Chaeronea (*HA Marcus* 8.3; Dio 71.1.2). Trouble had begun with severe flooding: the Tiber overflowed its banks, destroyed many buildings, drowned many animals and left serious famine in its wake. The brothers 'dealt with all these matters personally', relieving Italian communities hit by food shortages (*HA Marcus* 8.4–5). But much more disturbing was news from the frontier. The kings with whom the dying Pius had been angry were clearly those in the east, particularly the Parthian Vologaes III. Pius had already commissioned the commander of one of the Syrian legions, Neratius Proculus, to bring reinforcements to that province because of the threat (Weiss (2007)). But they either arrived too late or were ineffective. Vologaes attacked both Rome's major eastern provinces. His general Chosroes destroyed a whole legion in Cappadocia and Vologaes himself invaded Syria. (See also Chapter 13 in this volume.)

It is no surprise that Marcus asked Fronto to send him

some really eloquent reading matter, something by yourself, or Cato, or Cicero, or Sallust, or Gracchus, or some poet – for I need distraction, especially in this kind of way, by reading something that will uplift and diffuse my pressing anxieties. (*Ad Antoninum imp.* 4.1.3 = vdH² 105, 13–17)

During the winter of 161/2, with news from the east especially bad and the people of Syria in rebellious mood, Marcus and Lucius decided that one emperor must go to the front. The choice fell on Lucius. According to the *HA*, Marcus

sent Lucius, either so that his immorality could not be carried on in the city, under the eyes of all, or to learn thrift by overseas travel and return a reformed character through the fear inspired by warfare, or simply to realise that he was an *imperator*. (*Marcus* 8.9; *Verus* 5.8)

Neither brother had any military experience whatever. Pius had not thought it necessary for them to have a spell with the army, unlike Aelius Caesar, whom Hadrian had sent to Pannonia after his adoption (*HA Hadrianus* 23.13).

At about this time a new *ab epistulis*, or 'Chief Secretary', was appointed. Unlike his predecessors – the best-known being the famous biographer of the Caesars, Suetonius Tranquillus – the new man, Titus Varius Clemens, was not a literary figure. A native of Celeia in the Danubian province Noricum, he had

had a long military career, including active service in Mauretania, followed by five procuratorships, two of them being at the same time governorships. Although in theory the *ab epistulis*' role was only to compose letters of appointment for posts in the emperors' service, Clemens was well qualified to advise Marcus on whom to choose (Pflaum (1961) no. 156). At about this time Fronto sent Marcus a speech of Cicero's, presumably the *Pro lege Manilia*, with the comment that

you will find in it many chapters aptly suited to your present counsels, regarding the choice of army commanders, the interests of the allies, the protection of the provinces, the discipline of the soldiers, the qualifications required for commanders in the field and elsewhere.

A little later Fronto wrote a long letter, full of historical examples, to convince Marcus that initial reverses could turn into resounding victories: 'Mars has always and everywhere changed our troubles into successes and our terrors into triumphs' (Fronto, *De bello Parthico* 10 and 1 = vdH² 225, 3ff. and 220, 12ff.).

In a letter congratulating Fronto on his birthday Marcus mentioned that Faustina was recovering her health. One of the twins, Antoninus, had been ill with a cough but was on the mend. The family was at Lorium, where they were due to celebrate the birthday of the youngest daughter, Cornificia, but Fronto should not 'undertake the trying journey' to attend. Replying to Marcus' good wishes, Fronto expressed his pride at his former pupil's performance:

I see you as excellent an emperor as I had hoped, as just and free from fault as I guaranteed, as popular and as welcome to the Roman people as I desired, as fond of me as I could wish and as eloquent as you yourself could wish.

The last point was particularly gratifying: Marcus' increased duties required him to put into practice all Fronto's lessons in public speaking and he was even 'beginning to feel the wish to be eloquent once more, in spite of having for a time lost interest'. Fronto praised Marcus' speech in the Senate after an earthquake at Cyzicus, in which the dramatic nature of the event had been captured and his audience moved and impressed. In another letter, devoted to the subject of eloquence, Fronto tellingly reminded Marcus that 'even if you attain to the wisdom of Cleanthes or Zeno, yet, against your will you must wear the purple imperial cloak, not the philosopher's woollen cape'; and repeated his message from twenty years earlier, that 'philosophy will tell you what to say, eloquence will tell you how to say it' (Fronto, *Ad Antoninum imp.* 1.1. 1–2 = vdH² 86, 9–24; 1.2.1–6 = vdH² 86, 25–89, 12; *De eloquentia* 2.11 and 16 = vdH² 140, 6–8 and 143, 18–19).

Before long the twins were at Rome. Fronto wrote that 'I have seen your little chicks, the most welcome sight in my life. They look just like you, so much so that nothing could be more like.' Going to see them, he said, was like taking a short cut to Lorium, where Marcus was, for

I saw you not only opposite me but in more than one place, whether I turned to the right or to the left. They have quite a healthy colour, the gods be praised, and strong lungs. One was holding a piece of white bread, the other a piece of black bread – clearly a philosopher's offspring! . . . So now take care that you don't find me somewhat prouder, for I have those that I can love instead of you, not only with my eyes but with my ears.

Marcus was touched:

I saw my little sons when you saw them and I saw you too, when reading your letter. I beg you, my master, love me as you love me, and love me too, as you love those little ones of ours.

Meanwhile Faustina, before the end of 162, bore another son, who was given his father's original names, Marcus Annius Verus (Birley (1987) 248). Marcus added at the end of his letter: 'Write often to my lord brother, for his desires, indeed, make me unreasonable and violent. Farewell, most delightful of masters. Give my love to your grandson' (Fronto, *Ad Antoninum imp.* 1.3–4 = vdH² 91, 15–92, 10).

Marcus' remarks about Lucius reflect his concern: Lucius' journey to the east had been interrupted before he even left Italy – by illness brought on by high living, it seems – and his progress through Greece and the provinces to Asia Minor was protracted (*HA Verus* 5.7–9). Fronto's grandson was staying with the orator and his wife: he was the son of Fronto's daughter Cornelia Cratia and her husband Aufidius Victorinus, Marcus' friend and fellow-pupil, who was now away governing Upper Germany (Champlin (1980)).

In the early 160s Marcus had to confront a troublesome family matter. His adoptive great-aunt Matidia, sister of Hadrian's empress Sabina, had died and there was a legal squabble about her will. She had been enormously wealthy and like many rich, childless old women in Rome had attracted a horde of parasites, who had persuaded her to include them in codicils to her will. Although these had never been confirmed, some would-be beneficiaries had managed to seal them, thus making them valid, while Matidia lay unconscious. The result was that over three-quarters of her estate were bequeathed outside the family: this was contrary to the provisions of a law going back 200 years, the *lex Falcidia*. These details are reported in a letter from Fronto to his son-in-law Victorinus, with the comment that 'I have not been free from concern that philosophy

might persuade him to some perverse decision'. Fronto urged Marcus to press the family's claims:

That famous string of pearls that everyone knows about, and the other pieces of jewellery of such value – who will buy them? If your wife does, people will say that she has pounced on the spoil and snapped them up for a minimal price, to make sure the legatees get as little as possible. But Faustina won't buy them, you say. Who will buy these pearls then – which, after all, were left to your family?

Marcus replied that after considering things carefully he was going to write to Lucius and make him decide the matter. (Fronto, *Ad amicos* 1.14 = vdH² 179, 10–180, 7; *Ad Antoninum imp.* 2.1–2 = vdH² 95, 3–96, 9.)

There was a good deal of other legal business at Rome. Marcus was described as 'an emperor most skilled in the law' and by the great jurist Papinian, a generation later, as 'a most prudent and conscientiously just emperor' (Victor, *De Caesaribus* 16.11; *Codex Justinianus* 7.2.6). The *HA* gives a lengthy summary of Marcus' legal and administrative measures (*HA Marcus* 9.7–12.6), confirmed and amplified by the citations in legal sources and by inscriptions. Three major interests are apparent (Birley (1987) 133ff.). First came 'manumission', the freeing of slaves, second the appointment of guardians for orphans and minors; third the selection of councilors, *decuriones*, for local communities. His consistent policy throughout his reign was to give any slave the maximum possible chance of attaining freedom, if there had ever been any question of the master wishing to grant it. Where there was ambiguity, Marcus went for 'the favourable interpretation'. He is quoted as opting for 'the humane interpretation' in the account of his decision in an inheritance case, where a will in which the testator had ordered slaves to be manumitted had seemingly been invalidated. The jurist Marcellus, who reported the case, commented that the emperor's decision, that a slave whose name had been crossed off the list of those to be manumitted should nonetheless be freed, was 'made from a partiality for freedom' (*Digest* 28.4.3).

A corollary of his 'partiality for freedom' was his measure to have births of freeborn children registered within 30 days of birth, in Rome, at the Treasury of Saturn and in the provinces in Public Registries. This was 'so that if anyone . . . needed to bring an action in law to prove his status as a free man', the registers could provide evidence. Further, 'he instituted a new post of *praetor tutelaris*, to deal with the appointment of trustees, which had previously been the duty of the consuls, so that greater care might be exercised in their appointment'. The main reason for the change was presumably that consuls were now generally replaced after two months whereas praetors still held office for a whole year. As for 'guardians', he laid down that 'all youths might have them assigned', not just 'in cases of prodigality or madness' (*HA Marcus* 10.11–12). One must also

single out his institution of the Italian *inridici*. Unlike the four consular legates instituted by Hadrian and abolished by Antoninus, who were in effect governors of four Italian provinces, the holders of the new office were only ex-praetors and their duties were confined to the administration of justice (Eck (1979) 249ff.). He also made more frequent appointment of *curatores reipublicae*, to supervise cities whose the local councils had been defective. At the same time efforts were made to fill councils, on which qualified persons were increasingly unwilling to serve, for example by laying down that illegitimate birth should not be a disqualification (*Digest* 50.2.3.2). Under Trajan all senators had been required to invest at least one third of their property in Italian land – a sign of the increasing proportion of provincial senators. Marcus reduced this requirement to a quarter (Pliny, *Epistulae* 6.19.4; *HA Marcus* 11.8).

Summing up Marcus' activity in this sphere, of which the above examples only offer a selection, the biographer wrote that he 'restored the old laws rather than introduced new ones . . . Towards the people he always behaved as in a free state' (*HA Marcus* 12.1). His pronouncements from the period of joint rule with Lucius are generally quoted in the legal sources as emanating from 'the deified brothers (*divi fratres*)'. It is fair to infer that for the most part Marcus alone was responsible, relying, of course, on expert advisers, such as his former law tutor, Volusius Maecianus, or the jurist Cervidius Scaevola (Pflaum (1961) nos. 141, 168a). A detailed study of his legislative output has identified four chief characteristics:

a painstaking thoroughness and attention to detail; an overcareful insistence on elaborating obvious or trivial points; purism in the use of both the Greek and Latin languages; an earnestness which produces an attitude to the pretensions of the Greeks far more serious-minded than Pius

– who displayed humor, 'ranging from harsh sarcasm, through milder irony, to a gentle comment on human weakness' (Williams (1976) 74, 78ff.).

In 164, the war in the east was going better, and there was a lull in operations. Armenia was now firmly under Roman control and Lucius crowned a new king, Sohaemus. Marcus and Faustina may have felt that it would be a good moment for the marriage of their eldest child, Lucilla, whose 14th birthday was on March 7. She was escorted as far as Brundisium by Marcus and set sail under the protection of the bridegroom's uncle, M. Vettulenus Civica Barbarus (half-brother of Lucius' father Aelius Caesar), and one of Lucius' sisters. The destination was Ephesus, where the wedding took place. Faustina, the bride's mother, who might have wished to be there, no doubt felt that her place was with her younger children, three girls and three little boys. Indeed, in the autumn of the next year one of the twins, Antoninus, died. As Lucilla was by

then pregnant, it was decided that Faustina should go east to be with her, taking some of her other children (Birley (1987) 131, 143).

By the end of 165 the war was virtually over. Lucius was arranging for Fronto to write the official history, directing two young generals, Avidius Cassius and Martius Verus, to draw up memoranda. He promised to supply these to Fronto and offered to prepare material himself. He asked Fronto

to dwell at length on the causes and the opening stages of the war, and especially on our lack of success in my absence. Take your time to come to my share. Further, I think it necessary to make crystal clear how greatly superior the Parthians were before my arrival, so that the scale of my achievement will be apparent.

Fronto had meanwhile been bereaved by the loss of his wife Cratia and soon after by the death in Germany of his younger grandson, whom he had never seen. In spite of his great depression, about which he wrote to both Marcus and Lucius, he promised Lucius that as soon as he received the memoranda he would ‘with the best will in the world get down to work’ on the projected history (Fronto, *Ad Verum imp.* 1.2 = vdH² 108, 14–109, 4; 2.8 = vdH² 113, 1–17).

The war duly ended in 166, with Cassius leading a final sweep beyond the Tigris into Media after sacking the Parthian capital Ctesiphon. Less creditable was the destruction of the Greek city of Seleucia on the opposite bank of the Tigris, after the population had opened its gates to welcome the Romans (Birley (1987) 140). The exact date of Lucius’ return to Rome is not recorded. Fronto wrote to congratulate him:

although it has for a long time now been wearying and painful for me to go on living in this state of ill-health, yet when I see you return with such great glory . . . I will not have lived in vain, and will not be unwilling to live on for as long as life is granted me.

He added greetings to Faustina and the children of both – Lucilla had evidently already borne a daughter (Fronto, *Ad Verum imp.* 1.3 = vdH² 109, 6–9). Whether Fronto actually lived to see Lucius’ return is doubtful. Of his history of the Parthian war only the Preface had been written. His health had long been poor, as his correspondence testifies, and he probably died in 166 (Champlin (1980) 139ff.).

The triumph was celebrated, jointly by Marcus and Lucius, on October 12, 166. Both now accepted the title *pater patriae*, and, at Lucius’ request, the surviving twin, Commodus, and his little brother Annianus Verus were made Caesars (*HA Marcus* 12.7–10, 12.8; *Commodus* 11.3). It was the first triumph

at Rome for almost half a century – the last one had been the bizarre posthumous triumph for Trajan in AD 118. An unfortunate by-product of the return of troops to Rome, notably elements of the praetorian guard, was that they brought ‘plague’ with them. Whatever the nature of the epidemic, it was to have disastrous effects and spread rapidly over much of the west. The superstitious later blamed Cassius and his men: it was Apollo’s vengeance – they had sacked his temple at Seleucia. The sources are unanimous in describing the plague as exceptionally destructive of human life. The great doctor Galen, who was in Rome in 166, soon returned to his native Pergamum, to avoid it. It certainly created serious loss of life in the capital, and the European frontier provinces were infected by the return of the legions that had been transferred east for the war (Birley (1987) 147ff.; Duncan-Jones (1996)).

In the meantime pressure had been building up on the northern frontiers, particularly beyond the Danube. Marcus had ordered the raising of new legions in 165, destined to serve in the north. War had only been kept at bay by diplomacy and there was an initial incursion into Pannonia in 166 or 167 (see especially Chapter 13 in this volume). Now he announced in the senate that both he and Lucius would have to undertake a campaign in the north. The departure for the front was no doubt planned for 167, but at Rome that year the principal preoccupation was the plague. The *HA* gives a graphic description of the situation.

Dead bodies were carried away on carts and wagons . . . the emperors enacted the most stringent laws on burying the dead and on tombs: no one was permitted to build a tomb at his country villa . . . Indeed, the plague carried off many thousands, including many prominent figures. Antoninus [i.e. Marcus] erected statues to the most eminent among them. Such too was his kindness of heart that he ordered funeral ceremonies for the common people to be held at public expense.

Marcus and Lucius had to issue several edicts dealing with burials, one of them banning unlawful appropriation of graves. Marcus

summoned priests from all sides, performed foreign religious rites and purified the city in every way. The Roman ceremony of the feast of the gods (*lectisternium*) was celebrated for seven days. (*Marcus* 13.1–5)

The story that the plague was divine retribution no doubt played a part in this decision, although the *HA* gives as the reason for the religious measures ‘panic about the Marcomannic war’, rightly or wrongly – at all events, the label ‘Marcomannic’ was at this stage anachronistic.

If one believes the *HA*, Lucius' behavior left a great deal to be desired.

He brought home actors out of Syria as proudly as if they were foreign monarchs for his triumph... Besides this he built a villa on the *via Clodia*, where he indulged with enormous extravagance in orgies lasting many days, with his freedmen and lower ranking friends, in whose company he felt no shame. He even invited Marcus, who came, to show his brother his own way of life as worthy of respect and imitation, stayed for five days in that villa and devoted himself for the entire time to judicial business, while his brother was banqueting or preparing to do so. (*HA Verus* 8.7–9)

Lucius' villa has been located, in fact on the *via Cassia* rather than the *Clodia*, between the fifth and sixth milestones from Rome – identifiable not least by the seven portraits of Lucius found there (Mastrodonato (1999–2000)). It has been plausibly suggested that Lucius chose to live there rather than in the palace at Rome, not just so that he could hold his parties, but to keep away from the plague-ridden city. Marcus' visit, it is also suggested, may have been for Lucius' birthday on December 15, perhaps in 167 – a date followed shortly afterwards by the Saturnalia (Fündling (2009) 227f.).

A side-effect of the fraught situation at Rome was, it seems, hostility towards the Christians, notorious for their supposed hatred of their fellow-humans and liable to be blamed for the anger of the gods. Failure to participate in religious rites was probably what led to the arrest of Justin and his companions 'at the time of the lawless decrees of idolatry', surely referring to Marcus' special measures. They were given a hearing before the city prefect, Marcus' old mentor, Junius Rusticus. Ironically, Justin had studied Stoicism before moving on to other schools and eventually to his conversion. What appears to be a verbatim record of the hearing or 'trial' survives, in three versions of varying length, of which the shortest appears to be authentic. Interestingly enough the philosophical prefect's initial question was: 'What doctrines do you practice?' The questioning did not last long and ended with Rusticus' statement: 'Those unwilling to sacrifice to the gods, after being scourged, are to be executed in accordance with the laws' (Birley (1987) 152ff.) Nothing had changed since the time of the Younger Pliny (*Epistulae* 10.96–97). Ten years later a particularly violent outbreak of anti-Christian hostility at Lugdunum (Lyon) was to lead to further martyrdoms.

The emperors finally 'departed, clad in the military cloak', in the spring of 168, accompanied by the praetorian prefect, Furius Victorinus, who had previously served alongside Lucius in the east, and a group of experienced senators. Reports from the north were discouraging: the Marcomanni and others were creating trouble, together with other peoples who had been put under pressure by more distant barbarians to the north. They threatened to

invade unless peaceably admitted to the empire. Negotiation produced some success and several peoples sent ambassadors asking pardon for their behavior. Lucius felt that this made the expedition unnecessary. By the time the imperial party reached Aquileia the situation seemed well under control. But in the meantime 'the prefect Furius Victorinus was lost and part of the army had perished' – not, as often supposed, in action but from plague, which had developed rapidly among the troops stationed there. Marcus was adamant that they should cross the Alps and they duly 'dealt with everything relevant to the protection of Italy and Illyricum' (the Danubian provinces). The two newly raised legions were stationed close to the borders of Italy and Pannonia and the emperors settled down for the winter at Aquileia. But the cold weather and the ever-present plague caused a large number of deaths, as Galen records. He recommended that the emperors return to Rome. In midwinter they finally set off but after only two days' journey Lucius took a stroke, near Altinum, where he died three days later. Marcus returned to Rome with the body (see also Chapter 13 in this volume).

2. Sole Emperor, AD 169–77

The funeral ceremonies were performed at once and Lucius was deified under the name of Divus Verus. Then Marcus turned his attention to the financial crisis, a major cause of which was the plague, which resulted in diminished revenues from taxes and rents on imperial estates; the raising of new legions was another major expense. There was now a serious shortage of recruits to fill the gaps created by the plague. Fresh auxiliary units were created; slaves were accepted as volunteers and received their freedom on enrolment; gladiators were conscripted, likewise the local police forces in the Greek east and even brigands. To raise funds without increasing tax rates Marcus held an auction of imperial property in the Forum of Trajan. Before departing for the front, 'although the period of mourning had not expired', he gave his widowed daughter in marriage to Claudius Pompeianus. Both Lucilla herself and her mother were thoroughly displeased: Pompeianus was of non-senatorial, provincial extraction – his family came from Antioch in Syria – and he was much older than Lucius. From Marcus' point of view this origin and social status were an advantage: he would not be a rival to the imperial family, he was already a tested commander and was to be a major support to Marcus during the coming years.

Immediately before leaving, Marcus withdrew to Praeneste, where he suffered a family tragedy. His younger son Annius Verus, aged seven, had to be operated on for a tumor below the ear. He did not recover. Marcus mourned for only five days, during which he gave some attention to public business. The games of Jupiter Best and Greatest were then in progress and he

did not want them interrupted by official mourning. When he finally set out he can hardly have realized how long he would be away, eight years. He had ordered Galen to accompany him, but, as Galen recorded, 'I was able to persuade him, good-natured and kindly as he was, to leave me at Rome – for, indeed, he would soon return' (19.19K, cf. 14.649f.K). This over-optimistic forecast is useful confirmation that the main crisis of the war had not yet occurred, the invasion of Italy and siege of Aquileia. (For details of Marcus' wars see Chapter 13. Here his other activities from 169 onwards are discussed.)

Throughout his years at the front, Marcus carried on judicial business 'whenever he had spare time from the war', Dio recorded, and 'often spent as many as eleven or twelve days trying the same case, in spite of sometimes holding sessions at night'. Dio adds that 'he was so weak physically that at first he could not endure the cold... he ate very little food, and that always at night' (Dio 71[72].6.1ff.). Two legal cases that he had to deal with concerned Greek senators. One was from Sparta, named Brasidas, and the question concerned a legacy left to his sons by his divorced wife, on condition that their father was dead. Marcus adjudicated in favor of the sons when their father 'emancipated them from his control' (*Digest* 36.1.23 (22).pr.). A much more troublesome case involved the Athenian 'millionaire', Herodes Atticus, one of Marcus' former tutors. Philostratus reports the episode, which took place at Sirmium, in great detail. Once again, as in the 140s (see also Chapter 8 in this volume) Herodes was at odds with his fellow-Athenians, in particular Demostratus, and this time additionally with the Quintilii brothers, who had been serving as special commissioners in Achaia. It was noted that Faustina was there and that her youngest daughter 'used to fall at her father's knees and implore him to save the Athenians [from Herodes]'. The daughter, only three years old, must have been Vibia Aurelia Sabina. Curiously, Philostratus was uncertain as to the outcome of the case (*Vitae sophistarum* 2.1.11f.; Birley (1987) 180f.).

The rising of Cassius in the spring of 175 meant that Marcus had to break off the campaign against the Sarmatian Jazyges of the Hungarian plain (see also Chapter 13 in this volume). Even though Cassius was murdered after only three months, Marcus felt it necessary to tour the eastern provinces. He was accompanied by Faustina and Commodus and at least one of the older daughters, as well as an expeditionary force. On the journey through the Taurus mountains, Faustina died, at a place called Halala, renamed Faustino-polis in her memory. They had been married for 30 years (Weiss (2008)) and she had borne at least 14 children, of which Commodus and five daughters survived her (Birley (1987) 247f.). Marcus still had to tour the provinces which had supported Cassius, notably Syria and Egypt. In Syria he avoided both Antioch and Cyrrhus, Cassius' home town. In Egypt 'he conducted himself like

a private citizen and a philosopher at all the schools and temples, in fact everywhere'. In spring 176 he set off for the Asian provinces, leaving one of his daughters at Alexandria. His last stop in the province of Asia was at Smyrna, where he met Aelius Aristides. From there the imperial party crossed to Athens, and Marcus and Commodus were initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries. While at Athens Marcus was petitioned by 'a Christian philosopher of Athens', named Athenagoras, whose work in the form of an address survives; whether he was able to deliver it before Marcus is doubtful. Dio registers Marcus' 'honours for the Athenians', including 'the establishment of chairs in every academic discipline, with an annual salary'. Marcus asked Herodes for advice on filling several of them (Birley (1987) 191ff.).

Back at Rome in late autumn, Marcus addressed the people and referred to his many years' absence. Some of the audience called out 'eight' – AD 169–76 inclusive – and held up all four fingers of both hands, a request for eight *aurei* a head, which Marcus later granted. Commodus was given *imperium* to give him the necessary status to take part in the triumph, which was held on 23 December. He had been exempted from the *lex annalis* on age of office-holding so that he could become consul on January 1, 177, aged only 15. Later in the year he duly received tribunician power and the title Augustus: there were once more two co-emperors (Birley (1987) 195ff.).

3. Marcus' Last Years, AD 177–80

Marcus was stayed at Rome for less than two years. During this time, among other measures he initiated a decree of the senate on the price of gladiators. No doubt as a result of gladiators being conscripted into the army during the emergency of 169–170 the costs of putting on public shows had soared. An appeal from the council of the Gallic provinces produced a concession: they could purchase criminals condemned to death from the imperial procurator, at a low price, for use as gladiators. This measure seemingly helped to provoke the violent persecution of Christians at Lyon and Vienne, probably in 177. It is vividly described in the letter of these churches to their fellow Christians in the east, quoted verbatim by Eusebius: the Christian victims became a cheap substitute for gladiators (Birley (1987) 200ff.).

The economy seems by now to have recovered. One small sign is that the issuing of bronze diplomas to army veterans was resumed in 178 (Eck (2003) 81). Much more far-reaching was a tax amnesty, cancelling all unpaid debts to the treasury from the past 46 years, incurred from 133 to 178 inclusive, a measure similar to that of Hadrian in 118 (it is not clear why the years 119–32 were not covered) (Dio 71[72].32.2). That year there was a disastrous earthquake at Smyrna. In an eloquent appeal, composed by Aelius

Aristides, the city begged for imperial assistance. Marcus is reported to have shed tears when he read ‘She is a desert and the west winds blow through her’, and agreed to rebuild the city. Dio comments that this generosity was only one example of

his gifts of money to various cities . . . I am surprised that even now [i.e. in the early 3rd century] people criticise him for not being open-handed. Although, in general, he was very economical, yet he never avoided a single necessary expenditure – in spite of not burdening anyone by financial levies and having to pay out very large sums beyond the regular expenses. (Dio 71[72].32.3; Philostratus, *Vitae sophistarum* 2.9.2)

In fact, the *congiaria* during this reign were very liberal.

By the middle of 178 the situation on the Danube was deteriorating. The Quintilii cousins, who were governing the Pannonian provinces, ‘were unable to bring the war to an end, although possessing much shrewdness, courage and experience’ (Dio 71[72].33.1). Marcus decided he must return to the front, taking Commodus with him, and for this reason the youth’s marriage was brought forward: the bride was Crispina, daughter of Bruttius Praesens, ‘The wedding was celebrated in the manner of private citizens’, but largesse was distributed to the people and the event was celebrated on the coinage (Birley (1987) 205f.).

Marcus and Commodus left Rome on August 3, 178, with a group of military advisers, *comites Augustorum*, and the new praetorian prefect, Tarrutienus Paternus, who was soon to receive an independent command (*PIR*² T 35). Aurelius Victor claims that before Marcus left

he was surrounded by a crowd of philosophers, protesting that he should not commit himself to the expedition and to battle before he had expounded the difficulties and obscurities of the philosophical schools. Thus it was feared, from zeal for philosophy, that the uncertainties of war would affect his safety. So greatly did the liberal arts flourish in his reign that I would think it the glory of the times. (Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 16.9–10)

Marcus only had a little over 18 months to live. There was some successful campaigning in 179, but early in March 180 he fell ill.

He began to abstain from eating and drinking in his desire for death, which made his condition worse. On the sixth day he called his friends and . . . said to them: ‘Why do you weep for me, instead of thinking rather of the plague and death in general?’

He died on March 17, 189, just over a month before his 59th birthday, either at Vienna (Vindobona) or at Sirmium (Birley (1987) 209f.).

The verdict of Ammianus Marcellinus (31.5.14), contrasting his own times 200 years later, with those of Marcus, was that

after calamitous losses things were restored anew, because the temperance of old had not yet been infected with the irresolution of negligence and laxity . . . with unanimous ardour highest and lowest hastened, as if to a calm and peaceful haven, to an honourable death in the service of the republic.

Dio gave explicit credit to the emperor himself:

He did not have the good fortune that he deserved, for he was not physically strong and for almost his whole reign was beset by a series of troubles. But for my part I admired him all the more for this very reason, that amid unusual and extraordinary difficulties he both survived himself and preserved the empire. (Dio 71[72].36.3)

FURTHER READING

The biographies in the *Historia Augusta*, abbreviated here *HA* (on which cf. the Further Reading and References for Chapter 1), are cited here by the name of their subject, e.g. *Marcus*, *Verus*, *Avidius Cassius*, etc. But Marcus' adoptive brother, later as emperor known as Lucius Verus, is generally referred to here as Lucius, rather than Verus, to avoid confusion with various Roman senators called Verus. There is full coverage of the topics in chapters 8 and 9 in Birley (1987), requiring modification in particular regarding the date of Fronto's consulship (now known to have been in AD 142 not 143), for which see Eck (1998). On Fronto see especially the monograph by Champlin (1980). Fronto's *Letters* are cited according to the most recent edition, by van den Hout (1988), abbreviated in the text as vdH², followed by page and line number, as well as by the division into groups in the MSS. Unfortunately the text in the bilingual Loeb edition by Haines (1919) is seriously defective, although his translations are still helpful (van den Hout (1988) 295f. has a useful concordance with Haines' edition). Birley (2000) was composed in 1988 and only a few corrections were possible before publication. Birley (1997) on Hadrian offers more detail on Marcus' adoption by Antoninus Pius. On Marcus' marriage with Faustina see Weiss (2008). On Marcus' legislation see Williams (1976). Klein (1979) reprints a selection of articles on Marcus Aurelius, of varying quality. For the most recent biography of Marcus see Fündling (2008), also his valuable paper (2009) on Lucius Verus.

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CHAPTER 10

The Relation of Politics and Philosophy under Marcus Aurelius

Lukas de Blois

1. Introduction

In ancient as well as in later times the emperor Marcus Aurelius, who ruled the Roman Empire from AD 161 to 180, has frequently been considered an excellent, well-educated, philosophically minded ruler, an emperor who led an exemplary life. In his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* Edward Gibbon says:

The virtue of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was of a severer and more laborious kind. It was the well-earned harvest of many a learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and many a midnight lucubration. At the age of twelve years he embraced the rigid system of the Stoics, which taught him to submit his body to his mind, his passions to his reason; to consider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external as things indifferent. His *Meditations*, composed in the tumult of a camp, are still extant; and he even condescended to give lessons in philosophy, in a more public manner than was perhaps consistent with the modesty of a sage or the dignity of an emperor. But his life was the noblest commentary on the precepts of Zeno. He was severe to himself, indulgent to the imperfection of others, just and beneficent to all mankind . . . War he detested, as the disgrace and calamity of human nature, but when the necessity of a just defense called upon him to take up arms, he readily exposed his person to eight winter campaigns on the frozen banks of the Danube, the severity of which was at last fatal to the weakness of his constitution. His memory was revered by a grateful posterity, and above a century after his death many persons preserved the image of Marcus Aurelius among those of their household gods. (Gibbon (1998) 70–71)

Marcus Aurelius has often been called a philosopher on the throne, and indeed he bequeathed to mankind his frequently quoted *Meditations*, an eclectic collection of thoughts that at least partly may have been written during the last decade of the emperor's life, between 170 and 180, and in which Stoic doctrines have pride of place (Rutherford (1989) 47). The influence of Epictetus is unmistakable, but Marcus' thoughts are also tributary to common popular philosophic tradition, which was part of a traditional literary and rhetorical education. Marcus' philosophical thoughts were, however, fairly individual and largely regarded ruling himself and his body, living under the shadow of death, and his soul's relation to 'The Whole', to a higher, more elevated 'City of God', in which all human beings participate.¹

In the following paragraphs four questions will be treated: 1. Were Marcus' convictions perceptibly influenced by the upheavals that characterized his reign, such as the plague and the wars against the Parthians and Northern tribes? 2. What was this emperor's view of a good or even ideal ruler, and of good government? 3. Did Marcus' philosophical ideas have any noticeable influence on daily practice, at court and in Roman imperial society at large? 4. More specifically: did Marcus' philosophical ideas determine or heavily influence practical politics?

2. The Events of Marcus' Reign and Their Influence on His Philosophical Insights

To begin with, Marcus' own ideas do not seem to be heavily influenced by the many military activities that he had to undertake. The *Meditations* were at least partly written between 170 and 180, in a period of great wars at the northern frontiers of the Empire,² but do not contain much about warfare. In *Meditations* 10.10 Marcus even puts his own victories into perspective, saying:

A spider is proud when he traps a fly, a man when he snares a leveret, another when he nets a sprat, another boars, another bears, another Sarmatian prisoners. If you test their sentiments, are they not bandits?

The last line of this short passage contains a commonplace about kings – or high magistrates – and robbers, which also occurs in Cassius Dio's story about the successful bandit Felix Bulla, who plundered Italian regions under Septimius Severus (Cassius Dio 76.10). Dio tells us that when Bulla had at last been captured, the praetorian prefect Papinian asked him: 'Why did you become a robber?' Bulla's answer was: 'Why are you a prefect?' The commonplace also occurs in the *Babylonian Talmud*, in which a discussion takes place about Ben Nasor, who may be identified with the Palmyrene prince

Odaenathus, the man who helped out the Romans after their calamitous defeat against the Persian king Sapor I in AD 260. In *Kethuboth* 51 B the issue is whether Ben Nasor is a king or a captain of bandits.

Meditations 10.10 is not the only chapter in which Marcus puts earthly pride and status or imperial grandeur into perspective. Ironically mentioning his most famous predecessor he says, in *Meditations* 8.31:

Think of the court of Augustus: wife, daughter, children, grandsires, sister, Agrippa, kindred, connections, friends, Areius, Maecenas, medical attendants, priests – an entire court, all vanished. Turn to other records of eclipse; extinctions not of individuals but of whole stocks – the Pompeys, for example – and the inscriptions we see on memorials, ‘the last of the house’. Think of all the pains taken by their predecessors to leave an heir after them; and yet in the end someone must be the last, and one more whole race has perished.³

3. How to Rule? Ideas about Kingship and Empire

Marcus’ *Meditations* implicitly give us some information about the emperor’s ideas on the ideal ruler. In 1.16, in a kind of obituary, Marcus discusses the many qualities of his ‘father’, i.e. his adoptive father Antoninus Pius, who governed the Empire from AD 138 to 161. This panegyric tells us something about Marcus’ view of emperorship. Orations in which somebody is praised may reflect opinions that an author has, and prefers to render in an indirect way. This form of indirect speech is called *sermo coloratus* or *logos eschēmatismenos* (de Blois (1986) 282). In *Meditations* 1.16 Marcus tells us that the qualities he admired in his adoptive father Antoninus Pius were his lenience, his refusal to be diverted from any decision, his indifference to vainglorious honors, his industry, perseverance, and willingness to consider any scheme for the common good; his conviction that rewards should depend on merit, and his superb tact in tightening or relaxing the reins. In Marcus’ view Antoninus was aware that social life must have its claims, and so never forced his friends to join him at his table or elsewhere, in spite of their social obligations. His friendships were enduring; they were not capricious, and they were not extravagant. In society he was affable, gracious, and cheerful. He was no friend of pederasty. Marcus writes that Antoninus – when administering the empire – thoroughly examined every issue or question, never dismissing them on a cursory first impression, but instead paying attention to every detail, and that he had an ever-watchful eye to the needs of the Empire, prudently conserving its resources and putting up with the criticisms that resulted. He was not superstitious and did not try to become popular by wooing the masses. He calmly and steadily pursued his way, avoiding anything that savored of the flashy or new-fangled, and readily accepted such material comforts as fortune had put at his disposal; when

they were not to hand he would not complain. Not a vestige of the casuist's quibbling, the lackey's pertness, the pedant's over-scrupulosity could be charged against Antoninus; all men recognized in him a mature and finished personality, that was impervious to flattery and entirely capable of ruling both himself and others. He respected genuine philosophers, but refrained from others who just paraded as wise men. Marcus tells us that Antoninus was not jealous of outstanding abilities showed by others, whether in public speaking, law, ethics, or any other department, and that he took pains to give each man the chance of earning a reputation in his own field. Though all his actions were guided by a respect for constitutional precedent, he never courted public recognition of this. His secret and confidential files were few and referred exclusively to matters of state. He showed good sense and restraint over the exhibition of spectacles, construction of public buildings, and distribution of handouts.

This laudatory speech gives us an image of a well-behaved, upper-class Roman gentleman, a common-sense ruler. There is not a trace of the philosophical ideal king. There is just one short remark about philosophy: Antoninus respected the wise men who indulged in it.

Did Marcus have any philosophical or ideological ideas about monarchy and empire? Anyone who reads Marcus' *Meditations* could be disappointed about the scarcity of really political views brought forward in this collection of essays. In this respect Marcus is not exceptional. In his *Hellenism and Empire* Simon Swain observes that the moralists and philosophers of the period from AD 50 to 250 – men like Seneca, Musonius, Plutarch, Dio, Epictetus, Fronto, Aristides, Marcus Aurelius, Galen – devoted much space in their surviving writing to the art of successfully ruling oneself and one's body . . . According to Swain, this 'technology of the self' was practiced with an eye on the behavior and advice of others as a taking stock through observation and practice of the correct mode of living in and with society (Swain (1996) 128).

Marcus is not standing on his own. His thoughts have a place within the context of second-century AD Greek and Roman literature and philosophy. He certainly knew Epictetus' work, as we saw above, and he may have known the orations about kingship by Dio Chrysostom, who liked to compare rulers with fathers and shepherds of their people, or with the Sun God, or Hercules, and to ascribe to good monarchs such virtues as *karteria* (endurance), *philia ponou* (love of hard work), *philanthropia* (love of mankind), *pronoia* (forethought), accessibility, kindness, and righteousness (Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 1–4). *Peri basileias* authors depict the opposite of the good king, the tyrant, in very dark colors, ascribing to him arbitrariness, high-handedness, and all thinkable and unthinkable vices. Greek Second Sophistic authors regarded the Roman Empire as a commonwealth more than as a kind of domination by a foreign power; a commonwealth that had to be governed by a sovereign who displayed

characteristics of the good king and cooperated with the flower of the nations who were living within his realm. Just like the cosmos and nature, the Empire had to be based on a fixed hierarchy of class and rank, each with their specific duties, and with appointed tasks for the individual nations. Romans were skilful administrators and fighters, Pannonians were none too bright but handsome and brave, and the Greeks embodied spirituality and ingenuity. In the works of such authors affairs of the mind ranked highest. True freedom is that of the mind; he who masters himself is stronger than he who masters his enemy in actual battle. In such theorizing Athenian power of the fifth century BC was, for example, but a weak foreshadowing of the truly great Athenian dominion, that of contemporary *paideia*.⁴

The idea of mastering oneself as the truly great task, bigger than ruling an empire or conquering enemies, is certainly an important issue in Marcus' thinking. In *Meditations* 3.4 the author calls someone who wants to control himself and to aspire to a better, more balanced life a 'competitor in the greatest of all contests, the struggle against passion's mastery', and there are more passages where Marcus pays attention to this human quality.⁵

Marcus considered the hierarchically built cosmos a more venerable counterpart of his own empire. In *Meditations* 5.30 he says:

The Mind of the universe is social. At all events, it has created the lower forms to serve the higher, and then linked together the higher in a mutual dependence on each other. Observe how some are subjected, others are connected, each and all are given their just due, and the more eminent among them are combined in mutual accord.

In the *Meditations* there is a belief in a higher, more sacred commonwealth, a City of God, in which all mankind participates, and which is higher than the Empire, the earthly cosmos under the dominion of Rome and the emperor. Such ideas belong to contemporary convictions, and may have been of some consequence to the perception and acceptance of the Empire by educated opinion throughout all parts of the Empire. In several passages of his *Meditations* Marcus Aurelius emphasizes an over-all unity that is at the background of human law, ethics and society, a common reason that unites all human minds, the origins of which are lying in a more venerable 'city', a City of God, which embraces all, and is almost a Platonic Idea of all cities and societies. In *Meditations* 4.4, one of the most important paragraphs in this respect, Marcus observes that mind is common to us all, and so are reason and law. We are all citizens of a higher commonwealth, partakers in its constitution, and from this common City is derived our mind itself, our reason and our sense of law.

In *Meditations* 2.16 Marcus remarks that reasonable creatures should obey the rule and ordinance of the most venerable of all cities and governments; in

Meditations 3.11 he speaks about ‘man, who is a citizen of the highest City, whereof all other cities are like households’, and in *Meditations* 4.29 he says that a man who is lacking various virtues is ‘a fragment cut off from the City, he who cuts off his own soul from the soul of reasonable creatures, which is one’. According to Marcus, this venerable all-encompassing City takes priority over individuals. In *Meditations* 10.6–7 he simply states that man is part of the Whole, but in *Meditations* 4.23 he more elaborately explains: ‘Everything is fitting for me, my Universe, which fits thy purpose, dear City of God’. Not only the heavenly City takes priority over individuals and individual interests, the same seems to go for earthly communities. In *Meditations* 5.22 Marcus establishes that what is not injurious to the city does not injure the citizens either, and in *Meditations* 6.54 he briefly remarks that what does not benefit the hive is no benefit to the bee. In those two very short passages he may hint at the higher, more venerable City, but more probably he just meant human, earthly, imperial community.

Marcus was not alone in having such ideas. Cassius Dio, a near contemporary, a Roman senator of Greek descent from Bithynia in Asia Minor, who lived from about 155 to 235, saw the Empire as a world-polis, in which Rome was the *astu* and Italy plus the provinces the *chora* (de Blois (1998) 3405–15, esp. 3407). This world-polis differs from Marcus’ common city, but it shows that ideas of such kinds of unity were not unique to Marcus’ *Meditations*. Another indication is to be found in P. Giss. 40, col. 1, 1–12, the only direct evidence for the so-called *Constitutio Antoniniana* of AD 212. In this papyrus text we read:

Imperator Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius [= Caracalla, LdB] proclaims:/... rather ... the causes and the reasons ... that I render thanks to the immortal gods for preserving me [when that conspiracy occurred],/in that way I believe that I should be able [magnificently and reverently]/to appropriately respond to their majesty, [if] I were able to lead [all/who are now my people] with all others who should join my people [to/the temples of the gods. I give to all of those [who are under my rule/throughout] my whole empire, Roman citizenship, [though the just/claims of communities] should remain, with the exception of the/[*ded*]iticii. Because it is suitable that the [whole populace] ought not/only ... already to share in the victory ... my edict will expand the/majesty of the Roman [people ...].

The conspiracy mentioned in this papyrus text has to do with the quarrel between the two emperors who had succeeded Septimius Severus in AD 211, his sons Caracalla and Geta. After Caracalla’s victory and Geta’s death, the latter was of course depicted as a conspiring usurper, who deserved *damnatio memoriae*. As a matter of fact this *damnatio* was carried into effect in a meticulous way; even in private papyrus texts the name of Geta was deleted (De Jong (2006) 141–59).

A notion of empire-wide unity is also to be found in Herodian's work. Herodian was a Greek writer who may have been an equestrian from Asia Minor who was also acquainted with Rome and lived from the last quarter of the second century until after AD 250.⁶ In 1.4.8 the author tells us:

When the report of his [i.e. Marcus Aurelius', LdB] death was known the whole army that was with him and the common people alike mourned for him. There was not a single subject throughout the Roman Empire that did not grieve at the news and join together with one voice to proclaim his praise. Some praised his kindness as a father, some his goodness as an emperor, others his noble qualities as a general, still others his moderation and discipline as a ruler.

Of course this is a highly rhetorical, exaggerated passage, but nonetheless it contains a notion of empire-wide unity.

4. Effects of Marcus' Philosophizing in Daily Practice

Did Marcus' philosophical ideas have any noticeable influence in daily practice? This is the third issue to be treated in this article. First of all, Marcus established four chairs of philosophy at Athens, for Platonic, Peripatetic, Stoic, and Epicurean philosophy. He may have done this when he visited Athens, in AD 176, between two rounds of warfare in the North. This visit, the four chairs, and some subsidies to pupils of Athenian philosophical schools seem to have enhanced the status of philosophy for many years to come (Hahn (1989) 119f., 127; Rutherford (1989) 82).

There may have been another tangible, direct consequence of Marcus' philosophical inclinations. According to Herodian, philosophy became more popular because of Marcus' own philosophical inclinations. In 1.2.4 this author says:

As an emperor he [= Marcus Aurelius, LdB] was merciful and fair to his subjects by receiving petitioners and not allowing his bodyguard to drive away people that approached him. He was the only emperor who gave proof of his philosophy by his dignified, sober manner rather than by words and a knowledge of doctrine. The product of the age of Marcus was a large number of scholars, since subjects always model their lives on the ideals of their ruler.

There is an interesting parallel phenomenon from about the same period. In his *Alexander* Lucian tells us about the career of Alexander of Abonuteichos, a fraud in Lucian's view. This Alexander somehow obtained a huge tamed snake, probably somewhere in Thrace, and gave it a human face by putting a mask on its head. Using the snake as an oracle, he founded a new cult in his home town,

and made a handsome profit by selling oracles and amulets. He even organized mysteries (Jones (1986) 133–48). A few of those amulets, which may have been used to ward off the plague, have been found, not only in Asia Minor, but also as far as Athens, Dacia, Antioch in Syria, and Egypt. In one of his articles Louis Robert paid attention to them (Robert (1989) 747–69, esp. 747–49). Why was Alexander that successful? One of the reasons was that a Roman senator called Rutilianus, and even people at the imperial court became interested in this new cult (Lucian, *Alexander* 30–49). Their high status made this new cult more important and popular. If such people were interested, it had to be a serious matter. In a similar way Marcus Aurelius' inclination toward philosophy must have made it a more important matter in circles around the emperor, and thus at top levels in society.

5. The Influence of Marcus' Philosophical Convictions on Practical Politics

What about the influence of Marcus' philosophical ideas on politics? Very soon after his death Marcus was praised by all writers we know of, and was even made into a paradigm but literary sources that discuss his reign do not make mention of any political effect of the emperor's philosophical convictions.

Cassius Dio tells us in his *Roman History* 71.34.2 that in addition to possessing all the other virtues Marcus ruled better than any others who had ever been in any position of power. In 71.35.1 Dio adds that Marcus' education was of great assistance to him, because he had been trained both in rhetoric and philosophical disputation. Dio does not mention, however, any political action that could be traced back to Marcus' political convictions. Nor does he make mention, for that matter, of military qualities, of which Marcus was very much in need during the many warlike years of his reign. In Dio's view a good ruler should be a well-educated, well-behaved, virtuous person, who respected traditional social hierarchies, and not a soldiers' hero, a popular, efficient, tough military leader (de Blois (1998) 3405–15). Dio did not have high opinions about the qualities of most of Marcus' successors. In 71.36.4, he regretfully remarks that after Marcus' death in AD 180 history descended from a kingdom of gold to one of iron and rust, as affairs did for the Romans of that day.

Herodian starts his work with a eulogy on Marcus Aurelius, who is portrayed as the example of a good emperor. Not only did he possess all the traditional qualities and virtues of Greek 'mirrors of princes', like a good family background, an excellent education, interest in culture and philosophy, moderation, zeal, courage, and charity, but he also excelled in military prowess and competence in legal matters. Herodian thinks that Marcus also knew how to select good assistants and sons-in-law (Herodian 1.2–4; de Blois (1998) 3416).

Like Cassius Dio, Herodian does not trace back any political action of Marcus to his philosophical insights.

In the fourth century AD, Marcus was considered a very good or even the best ruler the Empire had ever had. In the *Caesares* of Julian the Apostate, who ruled the Roman Empire from 361 to 363, Marcus Aurelius gets the first prize. In 312 AB Julian remarks that Marcus' only error was to select his son Commodus as his successor. Obviously Julian, a kind of neo-platonist himself, liked Marcus' philosophical attitude, and was glad to see it as the cause of Marcus' good behavior and his sound and wise government.

In Aurelius Victor's *Caesares* 16 Marcus is praised because of his successful wars and the sensible practical measures he took, but in this short work there is not a word about any influence on politics of Marcus' philosophical preferences.

At the very beginning of his biography of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, as he calls him, which was written at the end of the fourth century AD, the author of the *Historia Augusta* says that Marcus was devoted to philosophy as long as he lived and that he received an excellent education (*HA Marcus Antoninus* 1–2), but he does not give us a description of Marcus' way of thinking and its consequences to his policies. In the following chapters the author of the *Historia Augusta* ascribes all kinds of human and imperial virtues to this emperor, but he never explicitly speaks about any tangible influence of Marcus' philosophical insights on his practical policies. These insights just contributed to shaping his personal character and virtue, which in its turn determined Marcus' public behavior.

According to Johannes Hahn, Marcus considered himself a philosopher, as is shown by quite a few passages in the *Meditations* (Hahn (1989) 186, referring to Brunt (1974)). As Hahn indicates, the author of the *Historia Augusta* tells us that one saying of Plato's was constantly on Marcus' lips, that is that those states prospered where philosophers were kings or the kings philosophers (Plato, *Res publica* 473de). However, the influence of philosophy on practical politics is not traceable. Marcus was a very active ruler, in every respect, but he did not try to reform society along philosophical lines. There is not much philosophy in his warfare, his financial and fiscal strategies or his appointment policies, nor in his rescripts and legal decisions. Marcus had a particular interest in family law – guardianships, inheritances, and Trajan's *alimenta*-system included – and in rulings about slavery and manumission (Grimal (1991) 252–66; McLynn (2009) 181–84). In his verdicts and rescripts Marcus shows himself to be a pragmatist and an experienced connoisseur of Roman law. The traditional Roman virtue of *aequitas* characterized his many judicial decisions, more so than Stoic doctrine. More than anyone else Pierre Grimal tried to discover Stoic influences in Marcus' rescripts, and in the sixth chapter of his *Marc Aurèle* (Grimal (1991)) he cites quite a few passages from the *Digesta*,

but all those texts are standing in sound Roman traditions, and do not reflect any philosophical theorizing.⁷

6. Conclusion

The conclusion must be that Marcus' philosophical inclinations were of some consequence to daily practice, but did not much influence practical politics in a systematic way, through philosophically oriented political reform. Nor did the emperor have very original ideas about monarchy and empire. His ideal ruler looked like a decent Roman gentleman who would govern according to tradition and law. Marcus' philosophical convictions were not very much influenced by the epidemics and wars that besought the Empire during his reign. Through philosophy the emperor tried to improve his individual, personal qualities, which in turn would enable him to be a better ruler. The upheavals of his times, especially of the years AD 170–80, the decade during which much of the *Meditations* may have been written, did not exert much influence on Marcus' *Thoughts*. Even in the midst of such turmoil he concentrated on the art of successfully ruling himself and his body, and on adapting himself to higher rulings, those of nature and the City of God.

NOTES

1. See Birley (1987) 102f.; Rutherford (1989) 21–6 and 225–31 (comparison of Marcus and Epictetus); Fündling (2008) 40–55 and 115–29; McLynn (2009) 204–55. In his *Meditations* Marcus explicitly mentions Epictetus and his work, for example in 1.7, 4.41, 11.34, and 12.34. On 'The Whole' or 'World-Nature' or the 'Universe' to which we all belong and relate see *Meditations* 2.3, 2.9, 8.52, 9.7, and 12.23. On Marcus' idea of a 'City of God' see one of the other paragraphs in this article. It is explicitly mentioned in *Meditations* 4.23.
2. On the date of writing of the *Meditations* see Birley (1987) 211–23. Rutherford (1989) 45–47 and Fündling (2008) 116 are more careful. Rightly so, for it is extremely difficult to say anything about the date and order of writing of the essays, which together constitute the *Meditations*. On themes, character, and composition of the *Meditations* see Rutherford (1989) 126–55.
3. Cf. *Meditations* 3.10, 4.3, 4.19, 4.32, and 12.27.
4. See de Blois (1984) 362. On the Athenian Empire see Aelius Aristides, *Panathenaios* 225ff. On the primacy of the mind and self-control see Epictetus, *Dissertationes* 1.29.9, 4.3.9f.; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 3.10 and 26ff., where he discusses the primacy of Indian wise men over their king; Arrianus, *Anabasis Alexandrou* 4.8f.; Dio Chrysostom, *Oration* 4 and *Oration* 44.11f.; Ps.-Aelius Aristides, *Eis basilea* 29.

5. See for example *Meditations* 1.15, 2.5, 2.8, 3.6, and 4.3.
6. On Herodian see Alföldy (1989), and de Blois (2003).
7. In footnotes 40–73 (pp. 404f.) to chapter 6, Grimal mentions among others *Digesta* 26.5.24, 27.1.1.4, 27.1.7, 27.1.15.2 (on aspects of family law); 5.2.17.1, 11.4.3, 18.7.10, 28.4.3, 40.1.4.pr and 5.pr, 40.3.1, 40.8.3, 40.9.17.pr, 48.10.7, 48.19.33 (on aspects of slavery and manumission); 1.8.6.1, 48.18.1–2, and 48.18.16.pr (on slavery and torture); he mentions also *Codex Justinianus* 5.62.17, 6.27.2, 7.11.3, and 7.12.1.

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PART III

MARCUS THE EMPEROR

CHAPTER 11

Administration and Jurisdiction in Rome and in the Provinces

Werner Eck

1. The Cities as Self-Government Units of the Empire

The Roman Empire was a single political unit. The will of the emperor, as well as of the office-holders sent out from Rome, applied everywhere. The will of the emperor was not the same everywhere and above all it was not implemented and enforced in the same way everywhere. The Empire was too large and too diversely structured for that to be the case. Neither during the Republic nor in the first centuries of the Empire did Rome, and those who held power there, want to create a uniform Empire in which all its inhabitants lived and were administered in identical fashion. Because of her republican tradition Rome never came up with this idea, or, at most, only to a limited extent, in late antiquity from the closing years of the third century onwards. A drive to create uniformity would have required a colossal effort, which no one was willing or able to undertake. In fact, Rome left many things in the conquered territories in the same political and administrative form that had been in force at the time of the conquest. This at least applied to the lowest level of administration, which consisted of units that were by definition self-government units. In most cases we call these units cities, each of which had a central place and a surrounding territory that belonged to it. But tribes, *civitates* in Latin, were also self-government units, organized on similar lines. Only in areas where this model did not exist at all, as in Germania in the Augustan period, or in some areas of North Africa, did Rome step in and as a matter of course set up self-government units. For Rome (as was already the case for the Greek world) this was the natural way to organize the life of the local units.

Of course, there was no uniform Empire-wide model for the various units; their internal configuration was highly diverse. The cities of the Greek east, the *poleis*, followed miscellaneous models derived from the classical and Hellenistic periods. There the fundamental elements were in all cases the classical tripartite system: people's assembly, council, and magistrates. On the other hand, specific details, such as the number of councilors or office-holders, the method of voting, or the length of their term of office, were organized differently in every city. Much depended on the tradition of the community, but also on its specific size and its number of citizens. It is immediately obvious that a community such as Athens, or what was, according to ancient standards, a really large city, such as Ephesus in Asia or Antioch in Syria, each with well over 100 000 citizens, needed different administrative structures than a small *polis* within the Peloponnese or a little town in the mountains of Crete. Differing regulations were made necessary just by the numbers of inhabitants in each case.

In the western, Latin-speaking half of the Empire, this diversity did not exist or if at all, only to a minimum extent. It is true that even there the existing self-government units, whether cities or tribes, showed a great structural diversity at the time of the conquest. But in the course of the first centuries BC and AD their internal 'constitutions' to a large extent adopted the model exemplified by Rome and the cities of Italy. This gradual standardization, however, was above all furthered by the fact that Rome herself founded colonies and *municipia* in the provinces, whose 'basic law' (*lex coloniae* or *municipii*) was of course Roman in character. Laws of this kind are known from the Iberian Peninsula, for example, but also from the provinces of Noricum and Moesia inferior. These laws laid down that, besides the people's assembly, to which all adult male citizens of the city belonged, there had to be a council, whose members served for life (*ordo decurionum*), as well as a small number of magistrates. The latter were all organized on a collegiate basis, each magistracy in most cases consisting of two men, whose term of office generally was for one year only. The chief magistrates were the so-called *duoviri iure dicundo*, two men, whose main task lay in jurisdiction. Whoever wanted to be admitted to the council or to hold office, had to have a certain minimum property rating; in the imperial period, this applied to the *poleis* of the east as well.

All these self-government units had in common responsibility for almost all the needs of their inhabitants, insofar as these went beyond what were purely family matters. This could range from the supply of food and drinking water to decisions in civil law cases and minor criminal lawsuits (but not major criminal cases), and from representing the community before the gods to road construction both within the city itself and in the surrounding territory that belonged to it. The decisions on nearly all questions were, in most cases, made by the council, the *boule* in the east or the *ordo* (council) of decurions in the

west. This was especially the case since all matters that involved public financing could only be decided by a vote of the council, if the regulations were met. The magistrates were the executive, who for their part had to render an account of their work to the council. The councilors were members for life and not all citizens in their community were eligible for election: rather, possession of a certain minimum amount of property was required as qualification for these tasks. This requirement also applied to the magistrates. On commencing their duties, the latter often not only had to pay a certain amount of money into the city treasury, but their property also had to serve as surety for the implementation of specific duties during their term of office. This applied in particular to the complete and punctual payment of the taxes Rome expected from the community. It was left to the communities how they handled this task, whether they had the taxes collected by their own agents or whether they assigned the collection to local *publicani*, tax-farmers.

The extent to which these self-government units were the basis of provincial administration may perhaps best be seen in the fact that the territory of a province was determined by the entirety of the communities that belonged to it. A province was not separated from its neighboring province by a marked provincial border, but by the borders of the single communities. Hence there is no evidence for border disputes between provinces, merely for those between self-government units. Most of the residents of a province identified less with it than with their home community, after which they named themselves as well. Likewise, for the higher level office-holders, the territory of their *provincia* (their sphere of competence) was principally determined by the entirety of the communities within it.

2. The Provinces and Their State Office-Holders

Like the self-government units, Rome's provinces and their administration were also not uniformly organized. There was considerable variety not only in their size but also in the identity of their governors and the manner in which they were governed. The size of individual provinces was extraordinarily disparate. On the one hand, there were small units such as the island of Cyprus, Epirus, the three Alpine provinces, or Judaea, some of which comprised much less than 10 000 square km; at the other end of the scale were provinces like Cappadocia (in the east of modern Turkey) or Tarraconensis in the Iberian Peninsula, each comprising several hundred thousand square km. Size was partly determined by geographical circumstances: it was natural for islands like Sicily, Sardinia, or Cyprus to be separate provinces. But political or military considerations also came into play. Thus, under the Emperors Domitian (AD 81–96) and Traian (98–117), the provinces of Moesia and

Pannonia, which both had to protect a long route of the Danube, were each divided: Moesia superior and inferior, Pannonia superior and inferior. That meant that military needs could be met more easily, while, at the same time, it avoided leaving a large army under the control of a single governor, which could be a risk to the inner stability of the Empire. On the other hand, several provinces were, if necessary, reunited under one command, as happened under Marcus Aurelius with Dacia in AD 168: its three independent parts, i.e. Dacia superior, Dacia inferior and Dacia Porolissensis, were again, as had originally been the situation under Traian, put under the control of a single senatorial legate, whose title *consularis trium Daciarum* reflected the previous status.

At the beginning of Marcus Aurelius' reign, there were 44 provinces in the Roman Empire, from Gibraltar in the west to the Euphrates in the east, and from the Scottish border in the north to the first cataract of the river Nile in the south. Every province had a governor sent out by Rome, who was the highest authority there. However, not all governors had the same title, nor did they all possess the same type of jurisdiction. All the same, the tasks which they had in common were more important than individual differences. The difference in the character of the governors was a consequence of the political compromise which came about in 27 BC, between Augustus, the winner of the civil war, on the one hand, and on the other the senate, which traditionally had been the comprehensive decision-making body in the political and administrative sphere. Responsibility for some of the provinces was conferred upon Augustus, who thereby was legally the governor there. These provinces were called imperial (*provinciae Caesaris*) and were governed by the ruler's representatives who had the title *legatus Augusti pro praetore*, 'legate of the emperor with the rank of a praetor'. The remaining provinces, however, were each allocated to a senator by lot, nominally without the emperor being able to influence it; but in practice, long before the time of Marcus Aurelius, no office-holder ever went to a province without the emperor's consent. These governors had the title *proconsul*. Both types of governors were senators and every senator was in principle eligible to be appointed in both kinds of provinces, as was in fact quite common. In other words, there was not one group of senators that governed a province as proconsul and another group that governed as legate of the emperor. All the same, there were obvious differences associated with the office-holders' titles.

A proconsul generally went to his province for one year only, even if occasionally, for various reasons, a prolongation was possible. A legate, in contrast, operated until the emperor replaced him. However, imperial legates did not generally stay in their province indefinitely; their term of office normally lasted between two and four years. Shorter or longer terms only occurred in exceptional cases. Thus a senator could, for example in case of a war, be kept in command for a longer term. Conversely, if a senator were suddenly needed

somewhere else, he could be recalled after a short period. This happened to Statius Priscus at the beginning of Marcus Aurelius' reign: he was recalled from Britain after less than a year as governor, to take command against the Parthians on the eastern frontier after the devastating defeat and death of Sedatius Severianus, legate of Cappadocia. Regular turnover of governors was in any case necessary, for otherwise far too few senators could have participated in this prestigious occupation.

It may well be that an imperial legate, by staying rather longer in his province acquired more familiarity with some of its problems than a proconsul could during his single year of office. However, imperial policy in this sphere was not that the political and administrative office-holders in a province should acquire specific skills; the basic tasks that had to be managed were similar in almost every province. However, a not negligible difference in practice was that, above all in imperial frontier provinces, the armies stationed there required the special attention of the governor. For example, in Britain under Marcus Aurelius three legions and as many as 50 auxiliary regiments were based, of which the legate was the commander-in-chief. In the Danubian provinces, in which Marcus himself stayed for some 10 years, such as Pannonia superior or Moesia superior, the situation was comparable. However, one cannot regard the governors of such provinces as being mainly army commanders; they were rather comprehensively responsible for all the tasks which fell to all high representatives in a Roman province. The legates drew their staff from the army under their command, whereas the proconsuls took their not very numerous personnel from Rome with them into their provinces, and these also returned to Rome with them at the end of their year of office. So in those provinces there was no continuity either at management level or with the subordinate staff.

The tasks common to all governors included coordination of long-distance road construction and control over the urban infrastructure – that was generally only necessary when there were different opinions on certain measures within a community and no consensual solution was reached. But above all, the governors were responsible for jurisdiction; for in Roman government practice there was no 'separation of powers'; every magistrate was comprehensively responsible for everything that had to be decided in the public interest. Administration and jurisdiction were integral parts of the occupation of a Roman office-holder. The jurisdiction of a governor included those civil law cases that exceeded certain maximum values and were thus removed from the local magistrates' courts, as well as the investigation of, and pronouncing of judgment in, criminal cases. Any lawsuit in which a severe verdict was expected had to go to the governor's court: such verdicts were banishment or loss of the social status of a decurion, but above all the death penalty or the sentence to work at a mine or similar hard labor, which often resulted in death. When around the year 176, a persecution of Christians started in Gallic Lugdunum

(Lyon) some of them were arrested by the local magistrates. But, the interrogation and sentencing of the Christians were carried out by the governor of the province of Lugdunensis, whose seat of office was in the city. He evidently presided over the execution of the convicted Christians in the local amphitheater (Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5, 1). However, internal city matters on which no agreement could be reached were also handled by the governors, as with several disputes involving the orator from Smyrna, Aelius Aristides, who, under Antoninus Pius, resisted the pressure on him to undertake certain expensive offices in his home town. Several proconsuls of the province Asia had to deal with the quarrels between this hypochondriac and the city of Smyrna.

A marked difference between legates and proconsuls lay in the raising and administration of taxes. Since the Republican period, the supervision of this sphere had been one of the duties of the proconsuls and it remained in their hands after the changes of the Augustan period. What this meant was that the senatorial quaestor who, at the age of about 25, accompanied every proconsul into his province, was given the responsibility. To be sure, he did not actually collect the regularly accruing taxes, i.e. the property tax and poll tax, himself, but rather acted as a clearing-house, into which the communities had to pay in what they had collected. It was either the communities' own staff or a tax-farmer that had to carry out the actual tax-collecting. In contrast, the legates had nothing to do with the financial and tax sector of their province. Instead, in each imperial province, from Augustus' time onwards, a procurator, who was not of senatorial, but of equestrian, rank and was directly appointed by the ruler, was assigned this duty. This financial procurator, who had a few soldiers and a considerable staff of imperial slaves and freedmen at his disposal, was responsible for the collection of all kinds of taxes, i.e. the previously mentioned property tax and poll tax as well as the inheritance tax, which only Roman citizens had to pay, and other smaller taxes, which were possibly not levied equally in each province. Where the procurator operated, the entire imperial private property (*patrimonium*), meaning domain-land, quarries and mines, was also under his control, at least as long as it was not entrusted to other procurators. In the provinces of Asia and Africa were large imperial domains that were managed by a specific procurator, who was not only responsible for leasing out individual parts of these estates, but gradually also for deciding contentious legal issues for the people working there. This meant that these imperial estates increasingly took on the character of self-government units, regulated on similar lines to the cities of a province. The same sort of thing probably happened to the huge mining districts in the Balkan provinces, Dalmatia, Pannonia, and Dacia, where especially gold and silver were extracted. It cannot be determined for certain whether or not these estate-procurators were subordinate to the financial procurators of their province. But it is more

likely that they were independent from them and that whenever administrative questions occurred they communicated directly with the emperor or his *a rationibus*, who was responsible for the entire imperial finance operations in Rome.

There were also equestrian procurators in the proconsular provinces; however, they were only entrusted with the imperial property there (the *patri-monium Caesaris*), i.e. estates, mines, or quarries. Furthermore, they controlled the custom duties levied on the frontiers of the Empire as well as between large groups of provinces within the Empire, such as Asia and Pontus-Bithynia or the Gallic provinces, including the Germanies (*quingagesima Galliarum* = 2.5 percent customs duty in Gaul). In the case of imperial provinces, it was most commonly the local financial procurator who controlled customs duties; but sometimes, as in the Balkan area, which encompassed several provinces, a special equestrian official was employed for this task. During Marcus Aurelius' later years, not only did a procurator take over the supervision of customs duties in this region, but from then onwards the actual collection of these tolls at the individual customs offices was undertaken by imperial slaves and freedmen. Previously this had been carried out by *conductores*, lessees.

The example of these different kinds of procurators illustrates that a certain differentiation in the field of financial administration had occurred during the second century, most likely because the collection of the necessary financial resources had to be made more effective. The fact that so-called *curatores rei publicae* were appointed, imperial representatives who were intended to monitor the assets of a community and prevent malpractice, is a sign that this effort at state level was necessary. The first examples of such *curatores* are attested under Trajan, but they became more common under Marcus Aurelius, i.e. in the time of the general crisis when the financial situation of more cities became particularly precarious. Still, *curatores* were not universally employed during the entire second century, but apparently only where communities were not able to keep their own finances in order. Besides those provinces in which senators served as governors, with varying participation by equestrian procurators to deal with financial matters, there was another category, in which equestrians themselves acted as governors. At the beginning of Marcus Aurelius' reign there were eleven such provinces not governed by senators. They included the two Mauritaniae, Raetia and Noricum, Dacia inferior and Dacia Porolissensis, as well as, most notably, Egypt. These governors' official title was *procurator provinciae*, provincial procurator, a designation also used for financial procurators operating in the provinces governed by legates or proconsuls. To distinguish the two, procurator-governors are now generally referred to as presidial procurators. The governors of Egypt, however, were entitled *praefectus Aegypti*, a designation that goes back to the first years of

Augustus' sole rule; the prefect of Egypt had a special status, which is among other things evident from the fact that he was the only non-senator to command a legion.

All of these provinces with equestrian governors were under the emperor's control, exactly like those administered by legates. Their duties were similar to those of the other representatives of Rome, covering all military and civil spheres, with the not insignificant difference that they were the only governors responsible for the collection of all taxes as well. Unlike in the other provinces no other procurator served alongside them. Another important difference between presidial procurators and legates was the fact that equestrian governors – with the exception, already mentioned, of the prefect of Egypt – only commanded auxiliary troops and not legions. Marcus Aurelius reduced the number of provinces governed by equestrians. For military reasons he had to station one legion each in Raetia and Noricum, and as a result these provinces were entrusted to legates of senatorial rank. Further, the two equestrian provinces in Dacia lost their independent status as well and were merged into a reunited Dacian province under a legate of consular rank. Thus, in this time of crisis, military constraints led to a definite change in the overall administrative structure.

Every office-holder in the provinces had his own official residence, which was vast and architecturally impressive. For they were not simply functionaries who had to deal with administrative tasks, but above all were also representatives of Rome, who had to impress the subjects with their presence; the buildings in which the governor resided with his entourage, in some cases sprawling and ostentatious, were partly supposed to serve this purpose. Such official residences, called *praetoria*, are known from the Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium (Cologne), from Aquincum (Pest, Hungary) and from Caesarea Maritima in Iudaea (Syria Palaestina). They also built similarly vast *praetoria* for the procurators, as the relevant building in Caesarea and the residence of the financial procurator in the Dacian city Sarmizegetusa show.

Still, it was a basic principle of Roman provincial administration that office-holders did not only stay at their official residence. Instead, they were on the move through their province for no small part of their term of office; this applied particularly to governors. They visited certain places, so-called *conventus*-centers or assize-centers, on a regular basis, both to make themselves available to deal with all questions that came up, but above all to adjudicate there. We know this system especially from Egypt, but also from the province Asia. There, the governor traveled to at least 12 cities per year to hold court sessions. This was quite advantageous for the inhabitants of those provinces, as it meant that they did not have to travel to the governor's permanent residence, mostly some considerable distance away. However, the governor was not able to decide in person on all the issues that were laid before him during these assize

sessions: the number of requests was often far too high, at least in the densely populated provinces. For example, during a session held by the prefect Subatianus Aquila in Egypt, 1804 petitions were submitted within the space of three days (*Papyrus Yale* 61). Not even the most conscientious official could cope with such an amount of petitions on his own; others had to assist him. The governor engaged partly people from his own entourage, but also Roman citizens living in the respective province, to decide on those cases, above all on civil law ones. It was only criminal cases that were heard by the governor himself. In the Christian martyr acts, which are almost the only detailed reports about provincial criminal law cases of the Roman Empire, the governor always appears as judge, never devolving those cases to others, as was common for civil law cases. As for the above-mentioned 1804 petitions, all were decided after 60 days, which shows how many other persons must have been involved in dealing with them.

However, not everyone accepted the verdict of the governor's court. In such cases, the only possibility was to appeal to the emperor, which required a journey to Rome or to wherever he happened to be residing at the time. Still, not everyone had the opportunity to do so; in practice, Roman citizenship was required for this attempt or such a high social status within provincial society that the governor, even if he had wanted to, did not dare refuse an appeal to Rome. One of those appeals from the time of Marcus' reign is known a little better. A fierce conflict had arisen between the citizens of Athens and Herodes Atticus, a highly respected senator and Marcus' former Greek rhetoric teacher. The feud between Herodes Atticus and two members of another senatorial family, the Quintilii brothers from Alexandria Troas in Asia, who had jointly held an administrative position in Achaia, played a part in this conflict. Herodes filed a suit against his Athenian enemies before the proconsul of the province Achaia, who was responsible for Athens as well. Herodes' enemies for their part appealed to Marcus, who was staying at Sirmium, near the Danube, at that time. The trial took place there before the ruler and his advisory body and was eventually won by Herodes' opponents. But it is certain that the defendant escaped without a penalty; in the end, only a few of his freedmen, who had played a part in the trial, were mildly punished (Philostratus, *vitae sophistarum* 2, 559ff.).

3. Italy and Rome

The whole Empire was governed and administered from one province for rather a long time under Marcus. The necessity of the war forced the emperor to stay on the Danube front almost continuously from the late 160s onwards. In addition, in the second half of 175 he had to travel to the east, where Avidius

Cassius had had himself declared emperor, and was away until the end of 176. Nevertheless, Rome was generally the center, from which the entire Empire was governed. Not only did the emperor himself operate there, but also quite a few other office-holders who had an important role in the administration of the Empire. Additionally, Rome with its traditional republican magistrates was responsible for the administration of Italy; for the heartland of the Empire necessarily did not have a provincial, i.e. a subject status, rather it was the territory of the Roman commonwealth, with Rome as the center.

The heartland was divided into several hundred cities, or self-government units, which had to look after the needs and requirements of their inhabitants, as was the case in the provinces. If conflicts arose, with which they could not deal on their own, or which, because of the financial value of the dispute, were taken away from the authority of municipal magistrates, the people concerned had to approach Rome, where above all the praetors, occasionally also the consuls, and in addition the senate, could make a decision or pass a sentence in law cases. Besides the regular magistrates of the city of Rome, from the Augustan period onwards various other functionaries had been appointed to serve within the territory of Italy. Those included, for instance, the *curatores viarum*, who were responsible for maintaining the long-distance highways in Italy, and the prefects who monitored the 'alimentary institution', set up under Trajan to provide child support for poor families. Marcus Aurelius had provided further financial means for the expansion of the latter institution. There were also procurators entrusted with the collection of the five percent inheritance and manumission tax (*vicesima hereditatium* and *libertatis*), who had perhaps been originally appointed in the Augustan period. Those were the only taxes the residents of Italy had to pay. The procurators and their staff had to work hand in hand with the municipal magistrates, because the latter had all the information on manumissions and inheritances in their records.

Still, there was no functionary who was responsible for a wide range of tasks in Italy, on the lines of the provincial governors. This deficiency became obvious above all in civil disputes, because every important case had to be dealt with in Rome. Hadrian tried to correct the problem by appointing four senatorial office-holders, who, like imperial governors, had the title *legatus Augusti pro praetore* and were each responsible for a particular part of Italy. But since their mandate was clearly all-embracing, strong resistance to this limitation of the traditional Italian autonomy arose, and as a result Antoninus Pius immediately abolished these legates. However, the practical necessity to have a decentralized authority for administration and jurisdiction in Italy that was no longer concentrated in Rome persuaded Marcus Aurelius to go against his father Pius' cancellation of Hadrian's reform, and he implemented a change that was lasting. In about AD 165, he first of all appointed four senatorial officials, so-called *iuridici* (judicial officers), whose role was to deal with voluntary

jurisdiction in certain regions of Italy, including the appointment of legal guardians for orphans. The number of orphans had significantly increased as a consequence of the plague, the impact of which started to become obvious around that time. Thanks to the presence of those *iuridici* in the Italian provinces, the journey to Rome became superfluous; without them, the regular magistrates of the city of Rome, above all the praetors or consuls, would have been obliged to appoint tutors (and trustees for women not legally empowered to act for themselves) for the many cases which could not be decided by the municipal magistrates. Since many ordinary people needed tutors and trustees as well, a great number of essential decisions could not have been made, not least because of the expense involved in a journey to Rome; this would have caused an erosion of the social system, which Marcus wanted to prevent. Apparently, no resistance arose against those new decentralized officials; the *iuridici* continued to be appointed and eventually, by the end of the third century, evolved into office-holders with all-embracing duties, thus being indistinguishable from governors. Almost simultaneously with the *iuridici*, a special *praetor tutelar*is was appointed in Rome itself; he was, like the Italian *iuridici*, particularly responsible for assigning tutors in Rome and in the district surrounding it, up to a radius of about 100 miles (*ILS* 1118, 1119).

4. Rome as the Center of the Empire-Wide Administration

Despite the multiplication of officials and the differentiation of their tasks in the provinces and Italy, Rome remained the center from which everything was governed. Not only the emperor and the senate, which was nominally still responsible for certain territories within the Empire, were based there. So too were many functionaries first appointed in the Augustan period, who, although locally attached to Rome, were responsible for what went on outside the capital. Such were above all office-holders who operated in close proximity to the emperor. One of the most important functionaries was the *ab epistulis Latinis*, who drafted the letters in Latin which the ruler wrote to the communities of the Empire and was responsible for dispatching them. Until the time of Marcus Aurelius, he was the only high-ranking functionary for this field and had quite a large staff, the majority of which were scribes. Then, under Marcus, an *ab epistulis Graecis* was appointed; he, as an equivalent to the *ab epistulis Latinis*, dealt with correspondence with communities and private individuals in the Greek part of the Empire, thus showing that this part of the Empire and its inhabitants' way of thinking were regarded as important. Numerous letters drafted by him and his office have survived on inscriptions and papyri. By contrast, the correspondence with every other state

office-holder throughout the Empire was in the remit of the *ab epistulis Latinis*. Office-holders had to write to the emperor in Latin, since he wrote to them in this language as well. The text of only one personal letter of Marcus Aurelius, a codicil (handwritten letter), in which he promoted the equestrian office-holder Domitius Marsianus to a higher procuratorial rank, has survived, on an inscription from Bulla Regia in North Africa (*AE* (1962) 183).

In addition to the two *ab epistulis*, the *a libellis*, responsible for petitions to the emperor, and the *a cognitionibus*, who had to prepare trials, played a vital role for the population of the Empire. His role as judge was one of the most important tasks for the ruler. Emphatically and with obvious admiration, Cassius Dio reports how well Marcus Aurelius executed this role while he resided in the Danubian provinces, but this was true as well when he was at Rome:

Whenever he had spare time from the war he held court; he used to order that an abundant supply of water should be measured out for the speakers on the water-clocks used in court, and he went into the preliminary inquiries and examinations at great length, so as to administer strict justice from every point of view. As a result, he often spent as many as eleven or twelve days trying the same case in spite of holding sessions at night sometimes. For he was hard-working and applied himself with detailed care to all responsibilities of his office. (Dio 71.6, translation Birley (1987) 178)

The *a cognitionibus* was responsible for the preparation of those trials; during the court sessions, an advisory body (a *consilium*) was always present. Among them were individuals with a particular legal expertise, whom Marcus consulted for advice after hearing the evidence. The former equestrian Volusius Maecianus, who had already served as *a libellis* under Antoninus Pius and whom Marcus had adlected into the senate, was one the most important counselors of the emperor; he also gives insight into Marcus Aurelius' behavior during the court sessions (e.g. *Digest* 36, 1, 23; 37, 14, 17 *pr.*).

It cannot be exactly established what types of lawsuits were heard by the emperor, but it was definitely only a minority. The majority of cases from Rome and Italy came before other courts, presided over by a praetor, in which – according to Republican tradition – the verdicts were decided by a jury; this, for instance, applied to lawsuits concerning adultery. Ordinary civil lawsuits were, as in the provinces, entrusted to single judges that were selected by a praetor from the five sections of jurors, the *iudices selecti*. Other cases were handled by the urban prefect who had to keep the peace and maintain order in the city, a task for which he had three urban cohorts (*cohortes urbanae*) at his disposal. The urban prefect adjudicated criminal lawsuits, to which some of the so-called *crimina publica* (forgery, murder, poisoning, arson, temple

robbery) belonged, as well as crimes that can be summed up under robbery and theft in the broadest sense. Furthermore, he was responsible for those cases that threatened the public or social order in any other way. Therefore, trials against Christians were also held before the court of the urban prefect, for example against the philosopher Iustinus, who came from Neapolis (Samaria) in Syria Palaestina, but had taught in Rome. In the first years of Marcus Aurelius, he was sentenced to death by the urban prefect Iunius Rusticus. Above all, many disputes involving slaves fell under his authority, likewise those between patrons and freedmen. In addition to that, the *praefectus urbi* was also responsible for the surveillance of the urban markets, which explains why the control of weights is attested under Iunius Rusticus. Standard weights, on which economic life was based, have been found in Italy and the provinces, naming this prefect.

Finally, the two praetorian prefects, who were above all the commanders of the ten cohorts of the praetorian guard, were also increasingly involved in this period with the deciding of legal cases; moreover, they became a general peacekeeping power in Italy, because they had an army that, if necessary, could also be used outside Rome. Around the year 170, the two *praefecti praetorio* of Marcus Aurelius, Bassaeus Rufus and Macrinus Vindex, wrote a letter to the municipal magistrates of Saepinum, a city in southern Italy; it was strongly worded, to give greater emphasis to their orders. The reasons behind it were recurring frictions, even violent assaults, between the tenants of imperial flocks of sheep and the magistrates of Saepinum (and of another city, Bovianum); these conflicts arose whenever the flocks were moved through the territory of this city to new pastures. Since it concerned imperial property, which could possibly be harmed by those conflicts, a high functionary, i.e. a freedman in the office of the *a rationibus*, the imperial audit office, wrote to the praetorian prefects to ask for support, whereupon the prefects sent a letter to Saepinum, couched in appropriately unambiguous language (Laffi (1965) 177ff.).

Although it is not known how the case of the flocks and their tenants eventually ended, it makes clear how the different departments of the imperial administration in Rome worked together to solve a common problem, which concerned both public order and the financial interests of the rulers. As far as this incident is concerned, it is worth noting that, at least according to the three surviving letters, the entire case was negotiated and decided by the different office-holders without involving the emperor. In most of our sources the emperors are mentioned as those who made the decisions. This probably results from the perspective of our historical traditions, which above all focus on the decisions the particular emperor made; on the other hand, it is a fact that many decisions actually made by functionaries in Rome were still associated with the name of the emperor, because the imperial authority always supported those who made dispositions. In reality an emperor like Marcus Aurelius devoted his

entire lifetime to the problems of the Empire and its inhabitants (*HA vita Marci* 9, 7–12, 6), but even the capacities of an emperor like him were limited. He also needed help and many things did not require his approval. In the provinces, e.g. with the *praefectus Aegypti*, decisions had to be taken all the time, even concerning general questions; such decisions have survived in great numbers on papyri, and they all go back to the prefect (and his counselors), without any consultation of the emperor. It can hardly have been different at Rome. Various office-holders decided and acted as spokesmen for the emperor, even if their decisions were seen as his in the end. Only in that way could the vast Empire be governed: by the emperor and his office-holders in Rome, Italy, and the provinces.

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CHAPTER 12

Religion in the Age of Marcus Aurelius

Mark J. Edwards

No imperial reign before that of Marcus Aurelius offers such diverse and abundant materials for a study of religions. Talk of God or gods is universal in philosophical reasoning on the first cause or the ends of conduct; silent religions find a voice, and two that were barely known acquire a new salience – Mithraism by its artifacts, Christianity by summoning the world to disputation. At the same time, as all change implies continuity, there was much that remained unaltered. In a chapter of this scope, it will be expedient to deal briefly at the beginning with those phenomena that did not change or changed little and then to proceed to the detailed illustration and discussion of those that exhibit development, or were simply new.

1. The Religious Situation

In the early 20th century, it was usual for scholars to maintain that in the age of the Antonines a new sensibility supervened upon the universal leveling of ranks and the consequent atrophy of the local institutions which had once sustained belief. For the populace this might entail no more than the translation of homage from the local altar to some power which was supposed to be ubiquitous; the stars sufficed for many, while there were some, no doubt, for whom the veneration of Rome and the genius of its temporary overlord were as much a creed as a duty. Cultivated or ambitious minds, on the other hand (so it is argued) looked for motives to thought and action more reliable than the countenance of the emperor or the fickle adulation of the mob. Aelius Aristides, a grandiloquent hypochondriac who ascribed his health and much of his fame to the private ministrations of Asclepius, appears to Festugière to exhibit a ‘personal

religion' which was new to the world and a cause of its transformation (Festugière (1954) 68–104). To E.R. Dodds he is an egregious specimen of the 'anxiety' which this scholar, as a disciple of Freud, believed to be the true distemper of the Antonine era and the matrix of religious enthusiasm in any age (Dodds (1965)). A.D. Nock is one of many scholars who have read the 11th book of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* as a veridical account of his conversion to an austere philosophy (Nock (1933) 138–55). To Cumont (1911) Apuleius is only one of numerous witnesses to the infiltration of Oriental religions through the pores that skepticism had opened in the Roman mind.

But are these scholars depicting the Antonine era or their own? Civic pride could not be lost if the loss was not perceived, and there is no such perception in the effusive tributes by which sophists obtained their livelihood. Aelius Aristides defends four statesmen maligned by Plato as though the latter were his contemporary; Rome, he contends, has not annulled the freedom of Greek cities, but dispenses freedom according to desert. Nor, on the view of the world that his orations presuppose, can human societies endure without divine guardians. When he bewails the impending chastisement of Smyrna, he appeals to Zeus before he starts to enumerate the virtues and distinctions of his birthplace (*Discourse* 18.1); in his eulogies on Dionysus, Athena and Poseidon (*Discourses* 37, 41, 46), sometimes speaking at the instance of an oracle, he takes notice of the sites that they have hallowed and the titles that have been conferred upon them at different shrines. Evidence of enlightened skepticism has been sought in the works of Lucian, where the gods appear in force, but only as objects of burlesque. Yet if mockery of religion is a sign of the health of the body politic in Aristophanes, it need not be a symptom of a general malaise, or even of any private loss of nerve.

Cults of Rome's traditional gods received subsidies from the Antonines, as did those of such domesticated aliens as Cybele and Dionysus. Altars were raised in all provinces to the goddess Roma and to the Emperor's genius (Liebeschuetz (2000) 989), yet it was also not uncommon for native suzerains and Greek plutocrats to find some local object of munificence. The African Saturn, the Punic Baal, and a number of Celtic figures were among the beneficiaries of this aristocratic sponsorship, which, far from incurring the jealousy of the government, was frequently encouraged on the principle that every subject ought to have some religion. Thus it cannot be argued that material remains disclose any waning of belief, if by belief we mean a readiness to perform discrete transactions with unseen agents who are supposed to guarantee the stability of mundane affairs. Even the silence of the more famous oracles – attributed by Plutarch to depopulation rather than skepticism (*On the Failure of the Oracles*) – was occasionally broken, and the creation of new oracles in various localities attests a continuing faith in the proximity of benign powers (Lane Fox (1986) 200–61). It is possible that the conjuration of

daemons from the underworld was more widely practiced then ever before at the end of the second century (Liebeschuetz (2000) 1005). No statistics ought to be based, however, on chance survival of papyri, and in any case it would not be safe to infer that these petitioners turned to daemons because they had ceased to trust their gods.

No craving for a world beyond the present one need be implied by the increasing use of inhumation rather than cremation for the disposal of the dead, for neither practice either entails or excludes belief in the immortality of the soul (Liebeschuetz (2000) 1006). Those whom the authorized usages could not satisfy may be divided into four categories: philosophers, who had always cherished the right to denounce what others called religion; subordinated races who maintained the superiority of their own traditions; soldiers of diverse origin seeking a patron who was bound to particular localities; and finally the Christians, who united philosophical incredulity with the pride of a chosen people and a novel sense of the ecumenical fatherhood of God.

2. The Religion of Philosophers

The philosophers whose works survive in bulk from the Antonine age are the Peripatetic Alexander of Aphrodisias and the polymathic Galen. The latter, following Plato in the *Timaeus*, argues that the exquisite composition of the human frame reveals the handiwork of a divine artificer, or Demiurge. Against Moses and his Jewish or Christian panegyrists, he urges that creation is a deliberative process which cannot be circumvented by divine fiat (Walzer (1949)). Aristotle, however, had already rejected the notion of God as an artisan on the grounds that if he took cognizance of his inferiors he would suffer change, thus forfeiting the perfection which belongs to him as the necessary cause of all things contingent. His God is a final cause, who moves the lower world only as the beloved moves the lover (*Metaphysics* 12). The efficient cause is not a divine intelligence, but the striving of the potential for the actual, the perpetual aspiration of matter to form. Alexander's innovation is to conceive the mind of God as the seat of the eternal Forms or Ideas which in Plato are independent of the Demiurge but subordinate to the Good (Rich (1954) 127). Platonists of this epoch are at one with the Aristotelians in treating 'God' as the name of the highest principle, and some at least agree that if it is good for the world to exist there could be no time when it did not. Plato's declaration in the *Timaeus* that the world is *gen(n)êtos* or originated could be understood, as Calvenus Taurus proposes, to signify only that it depends on higher and changeless causes, not that it has no temporal beginning (Dillon (1977) 242–46). Yet a role had still to be found for the Demiurge if one was still to be a Platonist (Alcinous, in the 10th chapter of his *Handbook of Platonism*,

posits both a transcendent deity and a Demiurge, the first analogous to the contemplative intellect, the second to the receptive intellect (Dillon (1993) 100–107). Atticus, more inimical to the Peripatetics, subordinates the forms to the demiurgic intellect, which is for him the supreme cause (Dillon (1977) 254–56).

All these writers agree that only good causes can account for the existence of the world. For Numenius of Apamea, by contrast, it is the by-product of a lapse of contemplation in the Second God, or Demiurge, who, turning from the Good, or primary intellect, is half-immersed in the realm of flux and change. The pilgrimage of the soul in this obscure domain is rendered all the more hazardous by the treachery of occidental daemons, who are continually at war with their eastern counterparts. For Apuleius, the African translator of Alcinoüs (*On Plato*) and admirer of Plutarch, daemons are sublunar manifestations of divinity, fallible but not malignant (*On the God of Socrates*). Some act as personal guardians, some as informants to the gods, and some as conduits of divine foreknowledge at oracles. To this third class we may assign the putative donors of the *Chaldaean Oracles*, who, choosing as human instrument two magi, both named Julian, promulgated a theology akin to that of Numenius, but with precepts for the calling and binding of infernal powers (Majercik (1989)). The goal of these incantations was to purge the soul and deliver it from a sphere in which the Second God is mistaken for the First; we do not, however, read in any extant verse that its sufferings originate in the error or trespass of the Demiurge.

In his *Meditations*, Marcus himself assumes the existence of the gods but seldom names them. ‘God’ and ‘gods’ are interchangeable terms for him; he approves of prayer and is not scornful of visions (*Meditations* 1.17; Rutherford (1989) 192–200), though in himself he is conscious only of an unobtrusive presence, as he is conscious of his own soul (*Meditations* 12.28). He asserts, but does not attempt to prove, that the gods have ordered all things for the best, and that they invite us to be their partners in doing good. They assist us in the subjection of the passions, but do not coerce the will (*Meditations* 9.40). This is the typical caveat of a theist against the astrologers, whose most eminent representative, Vettius Valens, uses ‘god’ as the appellation of a ‘heavenly place’ that ‘denotes the affairs of fathers’ (Tester (1987) 46–49). Contemporaries of Marcus could avail themselves of a skeptical portfolio of objections to fatalism, though in the hands of Sextus Empiricus none of these entails that the gods are more propitious than the stars (Bett (2009)).

3. Ethnic Religions

Though Isis has been called the darling of the Roman Emperors, a few coins are the only indices of royal favor under Marcus (Witt (1971) 236). Plutarch had

rehearsed the tale of her quest for the remains of her murdered brother (Griffiths (1970)), while in popular devotions she had coalesced with Artemis, Demeter, and Persephone. Her temples were numinous precincts, which the uninitiated entered only on peril of death. From the Antonine era comes our one surviving account of an initiation. The hero of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, having offered his prayer to the goddess under a cluster of names (*Metamorphoses* 11.2), regains his human form by eating roses from the bouquet held by a priest at her great procession in Alexandria. On his subsequent induction into the mysteries of Isis, he crosses the threshold of Hades and beholds the sun at noon (*Metamorphoses* 11.23–24). More he will not say, except that he is soon to be received into the mysteries of Osiris, which require him to shave his head. Apuleius never alludes to Isis elsewhere in his writings, and does not assume that her mysteries will be familiar to his readers. Nevertheless, his testimony is partially confirmed by Roman reliefs (Griffiths (1975) 44–47), and that his audience took a pleasure in hearing of oriental customs which they might not wish to espouse.

Priesthoods of Isis did not exclude the service of other deities. Sometimes she shares her votaries with a goddess who was worshipped under various guises throughout the Roman world. Pageants of Cybele and the Great Mother had been celebrated in Rome since republican times; the 'Syrian goddess' receives dedications only from private donors outside her native Hierapolis and a shrine set up under Hierapolitan auspices in Delos (Lightfoot (2003)). Lucian or an imitator, however, made her the subject of a skilful exercise in the style of Herodotus. While this affectation lends detachment to his narrative, and enables him to identify the goddess and her associates with Greek deities, there is no obvious burlesque in his description of her shrine, her yearly festival, her miracles, or even the castration of her acolytes. The Antonines sponsored the worship of her paramour Baal at Baalbek and Tyre in times of scarcity (Turcan (1989) 151, 167). It was not until the Severan age, however, that the imperial palace was occupied by devotees of a Syrian cult.

Of Judaism in the Antonine era we can say little that was not already true in the reign of Hadrian. Even before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 135 had forestalled all hope of a restoration of the Temple, the majority of Jews lived outside Palestine, speaking Greek, without land or cult. They keep their pact with God by observing festivals, by studying the law, and by observing its ordinances as these were glossed in the oral teaching of the rabbis. The revolution of the late second century was the kneading of the oral traditions into one written document, the Mishnah, which, although it drew on earlier compilations, was always held to be the work of a single scholar, Judah ha-Nasi, in the fifth and last generation of the Tannaitic phase of rabbinic history (Strack and Stemberger (1991) 119–65). Each of its numerous tracts is a catena of sayings on the stated topic, not all consentient; a single rule emerges, but

proponents of the rejected view do not forfeit the honor that pertains to teachers. The integrity of the people was sustained, according to Justin, by the ritual execration of Christianity in the Palestinian synagogues (*Trypho* 96); be this as it may (Horbury (1982)), the rabbis failed to prevent the decoration of these synagogues in a style that awoke suspicions of idolatry, or the fusion of Jews with pagans in the cult of Theos Hypisistos, the most High God (Mitchell (1999)).

4. Soldiers' Religion

Mithraism, if not quite a religion of the army, flourished chiefly at nodal points of fortification and supply. Where founders of shrines were not legionaries or veterans, they were civil administrators whose careers had included military appointments, or inhabitants of some town that was famous as a source of levies. While slaves are named in a number of dedications, there were no female initiates. The sanctuary, or Mithraeum, was artificially hollowed into the form of a cave if natural rock offered no convenient recess. The walls were decorated in imitation of the one scene that was visible to every soldier, juxtaposing mythological representations of seven planets with the 12 signs of the zodiac and occasionally a small group of circumpolar constellations (Beck (2006) 102–89). In certain shrines a lion-headed sculpture bears an inscription either to Mithras or to Ahriman, the hobgoblin of the Zoroastrian scriptures; more commonly depicted is Mithras' slaying of a bull, in which his retinue includes a dog, a raven, a snake and a scorpion, together with his torchbearing satellites Cautes and Cautopates (Beck (2006) 190–239). The name of Mithras is often coupled with that of the unconquered Sun, though the two remain distinct in iconography. Although the cult was generally held to be of Persian origin, its history before the Antonine era remains obscure. It was in the reign of Marcus Aurelius that the cult entered its heyday. The oldest shrines hitherto discovered on the Danubian frontier date from his reign (Daniels (1975) 251–53), while there is evidence in Dacia of a cult that did not originate with the army (Daniels (1975) 259). Mithraea appear in the Rhineland under Antonius Pius, though it is only after the death of Marcus Aurelius that this territory becomes rich in the architecture of the cult (Daniels (1975) 262–69).

If the Mithraists had teachings which could be reduced to a moral code or a metaphysical system, they did not divulge it in any book known to us or to the ancients. In the reign of Marcus, however, a generation of philosophers undertook to decipher the mysteries of the cave or at least to marry them with their own Platonic tents. Celsus averred that the purpose of their ceremonies was to free the soul for ascent through the seven spheres depicted in their iconography (Origen, *Against Celsus* 6.22). Since the adept passed

through seven grades of initiation on earth, attested both in philosophical texts and in epigraphy, we may guess that the Mithraists would have thought this a palatable speculation, whether or not they embraced it as a dogma. Numenius, who held the same view of the destiny of the soul, maintained that the cave itself was the theatre of descent and ascent, the entrance representing the sign of Cancer, through which souls come into the lower world, and the exit Capricorn, through which they return to the upper spheres (frs. 30–37 *Des Places*). Mithras himself he understands as the guardian of the equinox, which inaugurates the season in which the sun occupies the constellation Taurus, or the Bull. Pallas and Eubulus are other Platonists who imposed their own lexicon upon the cryptography of the Mithraeum (Turcan (1975)); fanciful as their readings appear to some modern commentators, they are witnesses to the salience of Mithraism in the Antonine era. It does not follow that their reading of it was normative, and it is no longer fashionable to suggest that this ‘religious society rather than a religion’ (Liebeschuetz (2000) 997) was competing with the Church for the mastery of the Roman world.

Mithras received no public devotions, and it was not he who was thought to have sent the shower which preserved a legion under the Emperor’s command when it was encircled by the Marcomanni in waterless terrain (Eusebius, *Church History* 5.5). Eusebius cites a letter in which the Emperor was supposed to have attributed this miracle to the prayers of his Christian soldiers – which is evidence at least that there were Christians who were prepared to take up the sword in defense of Rome. Others, however, named the sorcerer Belus as the savior of the ‘thundering legion’, or Julian, the mouthpiece of the *Chaldean Oracles* (Fowden (1987)). We can say of this episode only that it illustrates the propensity of soldiers in extremities to believe that they are under the special tutelage of supernatural powers.

5. Christianity

‘Church’ and ‘Christianity’, as historians of both never fail to remind us, were not coterminous in antiquity. Neither are they now, and we can speak of a church in the reign of Marcus as properly as we speak of a church today, with the same proviso that not all adherence takes the form of obedience to any organized prelacy, and that even the strongest hierarchies may tolerate profound differences in opinion and practice. The only institution of this period which professed to regulate Christian belief throughout the world was the episcopate, which by the end of the second century was established in some form (not necessarily monarchical) throughout the Middle East, northern Africa, and the Latin west. The business of the *episkopos* (as his name implies) was the oversight of a congregation – often, in this epoch, a dispersed and

anxious congregation, holding clandestine assemblies wherever a householder was prepared to furnish a venue. So far as any liturgical order could be enforced under such conditions, the breaking of bread and drinking of wine in memory of the Last Supper was the one regular and ubiquitous observance by which worshippers proclaimed that they were one body in Christ and ready to share in his passion. This 'eucharist', according to Justin Martyr, was accompanied by a reading of the 'memoirs of the apostles' (*First Apology* 66), though it is only by the end of Marcus' reign that representatives of the episcopal church begin to cite all four of the gospels that are now canonical. The president of the eucharist, according to a pattern enjoined in the reign of Trajan by the martyr Ignatius, was the bishop or his deputy; preaching, on the other hand (in Asia at least), was the office of the *presbyteroi*, or elders, who formed a second tier of ministry (Ignatius, *Trallians* 6 etc.). The third order, the diaconate, was entrusted only with menial duties, including the distribution of alms to widows, orphans, and other dependants of the community. To receive the eucharist and to hear the gospel it was necessary to undergo the rite of baptism, frequently performed by full immersion, and conceived by various witnesses as a burial with Christ, a regeneration, a catharsis, an enlightening, and an expulsion of the demons who were supposed to take charge of every soul at birth (cf. Justin, *First Apology* 61).

To the eye of a cultured Greek, the Christian was a desperado, willfully exposing his flesh to death and torture without any preparation of the soul. Galen we have already heard; Marcus and Epictetus both contrasted the fortitude of the true philosopher with the temerity of the Galileans (Marcus, *Meditations* 11.3; Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.7.6); Lucian hints that the self-immolation of Peregrinus the Cynic was no more than could be expected of a man who had at one time paid his devoirs to the 'crucified sophist' (*Peregrinus* 13). Rumors of cannibalism and incest, elegantly disseminated by Fronto the tutor of Marcus, may have been occasioned not so much by garbled reports of eucharists and love-feasts, as by the secrecy of Christian assemblies or by their abstinence from ordinary meats and sexual practices (Edwards (1992)). These charges are cited frequently in Christian apologetic, perhaps because they were more easily rebutted than the circumstantial indictment prepared by Celsus, perhaps a correspondent of Lucian (*Alexander* 1), in his *True Logos*. Christians, Celsus argues, are renegade Jews who are compelled to extort false meanings from their own scriptures; holding a crude and anthropomorphic notion of God, they accord to a lesser being the honors due only to the highest (Origen, *Against Celsus* 4.73, 7.12–13); their founder's life, bombastic and pusillanimous by turns, was crowned by a resurrection visible only to his own mountebanks (Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.64–65); unfaithful children of Rome, they have been disinherited by their own God, who has not protected them from the rigor of the Law (Origen, *Against Celsus* 8.53–55).

More formidable than these paper jeremiads was persecution, a term that covers both magisterial proceedings and ebullitions of popular hatred against the Christians. It was possible for one to grow into the other, as in the *auto-da-fé* of Polycarp in Smyrna, where the governor assumed the direction of an impassioned mob (Musurillo (1972) 2–21). Merely to be a Christian was a capital offense, and Justin records that, after one believer had been denounced by her worthless husband, a centurion who challenged the summary conduct of her trial was put to death with no opportunity of defense (*Second Apology* 2). Justin himself was interrogated, according to the Acts of his martyrdom, by a prefect who would have spared him had he been willing to offer some perfunctory homage to the gods (Musurillo (1972) 42–61). His trial took place in 165, and might not have occurred but for the information laid against him by the Cynic Crescens (Justin, *Second Apology* 3). Trajan's rescript to Pliny forbade officials either to seek out Christians or to act upon anonymous depositions. Hadrian, if the rescript quoted by Justin is authentic, ruled that penalties should be reserved for some other crime than the bare profession of Christianity (addendum to *First Apology*). Marcus, not so clement, issued a rescript against the fomenting of superstition (*Digest* 48.19.30), and the populace of Lyon took advantage of this in 177 to raise the greatest storm that the Church is known to have suffered before the third century. The long account preserved in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius (5.1) commemorates the sufferings of men and women, slaves and masters, all Greek speakers of whom a high proportion were Asiatics. The charge of devouring children is refuted by one woman's testimony that (in accordance with the *Apostolic Decree of Acts* 15) they were forbidden to eat any flesh containing blood. Once again, the governor takes the lead, ignoring the palliative clauses that were attached to the imperial decree. The bodies of the dead were drowned, for fear that they would be worshipped. It is difficult to imagine what enormities might be laid at the door of Christians that would warrant such retribution; at the same time, we should remember that there were Christians in this era who deliberately courted martyrdom (Ste. Croix (2006) 153–200), that a whole village had been known to present itself for execution, and that even the most urbane of apologists seems to applaud the gratuitous mockery of a pagan rite (Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 3).

The principal concern of the 'apologists' is to demonstrate that Christians hold a rational belief in the dominion of the one God, the divinity of the *logos*, and the authority of the biblical prophets, that the beliefs of their pagan detractors are by contrast perverse and immoral, and that therefore it is the persecutors, rather than their victims, who are guilty of turpitude, sacrilege, and conspiracy against the body politic. The work that we know as Justin's *First Apology* is addressed to Marcus Aurelius and his colleague Lucius Verus. In keeping with his title, which implies a forensic defense, he pleads that his

co-religionists are not atheists, fools, or traitors; from the outset, however, he writes as one who hopes to convert, not only to appease. The tool of persuasion, as Greeks would agree, is *logos* whether this means ‘speech’ or ‘reason’. The Christ whom the Church reveres is the *Logos*—that is to say, the Word or reason—of God the almighty Father. Yet whereas many barbarians have honored the Word which God imparted to the prophets of Israel, only a handful of Greeks have lived by reason, and they were debtors to barbarians even when they were not, like Socrates, martyrs to their own countrymen (*First Apology* 5; *Second Apology* 10). When Moses and the philosophers concur, the Christian sees not only a vindication of his own scriptures, but a proof of the dependence of the Greeks on an antecedent revelation (*First Apology* 59–60). It is the same prophets to whom this revelation was entrusted who foretold the advent, death, and glory of Christ the Word incarnate (*First Apology* 31–53). Pagans are not to be deceived by Marcion, a heretic who repudiates the Old Testament, or by Simon Magus, a rival to the apostles who is falsely remembered as a god in Rome (*First Apology* 26, 56, 58). The appointed means to life are the Gospel, baptism, and the eucharist; philosophers are wrong to assert a radical affinity between God and the soul, and if Justin ever concedes that they have grasped truths that were not mediated by the Hebrew prophets, it is in the torso known as his *Second Apology*, which some regard as a congeries of passages deleted from the *First* (Minns and Parvis (2009) 27–29; contrast *First Apology* 44).

Justin’s pupil Tatian, in his *Oration to the Greeks*, denies the philosophers any true apprehension of the divine, whether by theft or by intuition. Blinded by pederasty, avarice, and subjection to demons (who, in Tatian’s view, are fallen rather than intermediate beings) they have no share in the *Logos* who leaped forth from the Father’s mind before the ages for the creation of the world (*Oration* 5). Insofar as there is an argument in his harangue, it is for monotheism rather than Christianity; there is not one reference to the apparition of the Word in human form. When he left Rome for Edessa, Tatian is said to have made a heresy of abstinence, subordinating the Father who creates to the Son who redeems (fr. 7 Whittaker), and denying the goodness of all that inhabits matter (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.28). More philosophical, though and less venturesome, is Athenagoras, who in his Embassy to Marcus appeals to Orpheus and the Sibyl to show that the prophets of the Greek world too acknowledged a single God. In this he embellishes a hint from Justin, as he also does when he quarries the Greek philosophers for epithets, unknown to the prophets and Moses, which befit the ineffable majesty of God (*Embassy* 5 and 8). If he is the author of the treatise *On the Resurrection* that is attributed to him, he was one of a number of authors in this century who urged that the resurrection is not so much a miraculous violation of law as the peroration to the law which causes spring to follow winter and a new plant to emerge from the buried seed.

There is no technical theology here, except when Athenagoras discriminates between that which is *genomenon*, or contingent, and the Son who is the *gennêma* or offspring of the eternal Father (*Embassy* 10). The content of an *Apology*, an *Oration*, or an *Embassy* may not have been of such moment to the author or his audience as the art with which it was managed. Its mere composition demonstrates, as the invective of Celsus also demonstrates, that Christianity had a claim upon the attention of the learned. According to the threefold classification then in use among rhetoricians, the forensic mode may be assigned to Justin, the symbouletic to Athenagoras, and the epideictic to Tatian (cf. Young (1999)). We may be sure that the lost declamations of Melito, Miltiades, and Apollinaris also borrowed the idiom of the times (Eusebius, *Church History* 4.17, 4.26). This is not to say that they were ever heard or read by their nominal addressees. To deliver a speech in person was to expose oneself to judicial recrimination; so far as we know, the one martyr among the apologists was Justin, and not for his efforts with the pen. To submit it in writing would have been less dangerous, but what magistrate would have leisure to peruse it? The itinerary sketched by Robert Grant (1988), which enables Marcus to hear no fewer than five petitions in the course of a single tour of Asia Minor, would have tested the philosophy of the most patient autocrat. Apologetic in all times finds its readers chiefly in those on whose behalf it is written, not in those to whom it is ostensibly directed. Whatever their aims, these lucubrations shaped the Church by advancing certain tenets as though all Christians believed them, while pronouncing others inimical to faith.

If it belongs to this period, the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix marks the summit of Christian eloquence. Indebted both in form and in thought to Cicero, it is a dialogue between two friends, the Christian scoffing at the cosmetic piety of the Roman, and the latter protesting, not that he believes, but that in his disbelief he sees no better course than to perpetuate the usage of his fathers. Octavius replies for the Church, without naming Christ or quoting from any scripture. Briefly rebutting the calumnies of Fronto (Champlin (1980) 64–66), he employs the familiar arsenal of apologetic to demonstrate that God must be one and perfect, that a manmade deity cannot hear our prayers, and that the world is in thrall to demons, who corrupt our bodies by sickness and society by religion. More erudite, and not always banal, are the three books *To Autolycus* by Theophilus of Antioch, the only bishop in the surviving corpus of apologists who wrote before Constantine. In his second book, the creatures produced on each day of creation are interpreted as types of vice or virtue, while the Fall – not so much a squandering of perfection as a forfeiture of potential immortality – become a topic of sustained reflection. Being more of a theologian than his lay contemporaries, he is the first to speak of a Trinity, though in making ‘Word’ and ‘Wisdom’ the two other members of his triad after God, he seems to ignore

the common nomenclature 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit', which was enjoined by Christ at the end of Matthew's Gospel and already normative in Justin's church (*To Autolycus* 2.10 and 2.15).

6. Speculation and Response

It is one thing for an evangelist to adapt and refine the vocabulary of the unconverted, but quite another to offer a new speculation to the Church in the idiolect of its own apostles. 'Gnostic', an ancient term of limited scope, is now the scholarly appellation for a variety of thinkers who set out to explain how the covenant with Israel and the making of heaven and earth can be attributed to a superhuman Father in the scriptures known to Christ when he himself, as Son of God, had died as a victim to the Law and had thereby overcome the world. Common to all is the premise that the true Father remains unknown until Christ reveals him, while creation is the work of a pretender who is myopic if not malign. Under the Antonines the most notorious exponent of these doctrines was the Egyptian Ptolemaeus, who was said to have inherited the Christian Platonism of his Alexandrian tutor Valentinus (but cf. Marksches (2000)). In the system attributed to him by Irenaeus the Father is an unfathomable abyss, who mates with his offspring Sige or Silence to spawn a succession of thirty aeons, the last of whom is Sophia or Wisdom. Belying her name (or rather symbolizing carnal wisdom in contradistinction to that of God), she tries to create without the aid of her spouse Thelema (Will), or (in some variants) to obtain a precocious vision of the Father (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.1–2). A commotion ensues, and Wisdom is excluded from the Pleroma, or fullness, of God by the interposition of the Cross, just as the Cross of Jesus on earth was a stumbling-block to the wisdom of both Greek and Jew (*1 Corinthians* 1.21–24). She repents under the ministry of Christ and the Holy Spirit, newly generated as first-fruits of the Pleroma, and her tears give rise to matter. In the meantime she has brought forth an abortive simulacrum of herself, whose child, the Demiurge, personifies the human disposition to idolatry. Retaining only a tenebrous recollection of the divine, he fashions a world in bondage to the planets, proclaiming 'I am God and there is no other'. It is Sophia herself who sows the elect in this lower cosmos, secretly causing the Demiurge to produce a Son whose preaching reunites them with the true Godhead (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.4–7).

To the Valentinian school heresiologists assigned the obscure Secundus and Heracleon, the first commentator on the Gospel of John (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 6.30; but cf. Kaler (1996)). The subtle observations of Theodotus on the latent sense of scripture and the relation between the Word on earth and the Word above have been preserved in detail (Casey

(1934)). More jejune, but for many more seductive, was the theology of Marcion, who simply opposed the Demiurge to the hidden Father whose Son redeems the elect, without explaining how the Demiurge came to be or by what right the (hitherto idle) Son has deprived him of his subjects. It appears that he despised the flesh, and with it the Jewish scriptures which enshrine the carnal Law. The canon of Christian writings which he substitutes may have been the first body of texts to be called a 'new testament'. His enemies accused him of excising every passage which implied that Christ had human flesh or had undergone a bodily resurrection; some scholars opine, however, that his shorter texts were sometimes more authentic than the 'catholic' redactions that he was said to have mutilated (Blackman (1948)). In the wake of his teaching, Justin undertook to prove that Christ's redeeming mission is enigmatically prefigured in the prophecies and rituals of the Old Testament, while Melito of Sardis, in a homily on the eucharist, announces that the old covenant has yielded to the new because the living Word had effected what was merely foreshadowed in the written law. Both are writing avowedly, and with animus, against Jews who reject the Gospel, yet their typological reading of the Creator's testament proves him to be not merely good but infallible, while administering a profound rebuke to those 'Judaizing' Christians who, to Justin's sorrow, still enjoined the literal observance of the Law.

Valentinians – in this respect more like Mithraists than Marcionites – withheld from the 'psychic' multitude certain teachings which they confided to the 'spiritual' elect. In Phrygia it was practice rather than doctrine that revealed the virtuosi. The 'new prophecy' erupted when two virgins, Prisca and Maximilla, saw the New Jerusalem descending upon their own village of Pepuza. Montanus, another Phrygian, became their advocate and his own, professing to speak for the Holy Spirit, or Paraclete, whom Christ had promised to his intimates in the gospel of John (Eusebius, *Church History* 5.16). This spirit commanded frequent and rigorous fasting, with severe penances for all pardonable transgressions. Apostasy, it appears, was not to be pardoned; martyrs were venerated, and, outside the Roman catacombs, it is only in this region that inscriptions of an undeniably Christian tenor appear in the reign of Marcus (Gibson (1978)). The strong episcopate of Asia Minor, seeing in ecstasy a weakening of obedience, undertook to restore the sanity of the enthusiasts by measures that would have served to cast out demons. The most prominent of these exorcists, Abercius Marcellus, left an epitaph in poor verse, which, before it commemorates his visit to Rome, is careful to note his diligent shepherding of the flock (Ramsay (1897) 709–29). Nevertheless, the dispute did not at once become a schism. It was not, after all, the mere honoring of martyrs but the honoring of false martyrs that was condemned, and it was not only 'Cataphrygians' (as their adversaries labeled them) who proscribed the readmission of an apostate to communion. Women were the trumpets of the

movement, not its leaders, and while the clerical ‘salaries’ which Montanus paid were anomalous in this period (Eusebius, *Church History* 4.18.1), we are not told that he ordained his own clergy, rather than suborning men ordained by other hands.

The catholic theodicy of Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, was his antidote to every system that disparaged the Creator. Against Marcion and the Judaizers alike, he declares that the purpose of the old covenant, with its sacrifices and prophecies, was to adumbrate the end of all sacrifices and the culmination of prophecy in the new covenant. The design of the Creator, from the outset, was that his image should be perfected in human beings as they gradually acquired knowledge of the good (*Against Heresies* 4.38). It was always his intention that his image should be manifested in the incarnate Word through whom humanity was created (*Against Heresies* 5.16.1). Because humanity had prematurely seized the fruit of knowledge, the Word came not only as teacher but as redeemer. Taking the devil captive and propitiating the wrath of God the Father by his obedience (*Against Heresies* 5.21.3, 5.17), he was crucified and rose again in order that those who had died with him in baptism might be reborn in the Spirit, sanctified by the eucharist, and incorporated into the deathless body of the Church (*Against Heresies* 5.2 etc.). As evidence he cites the unanimous teaching of the four gospels, the consensus of the episcopate, and a chain of witnesses reaching back through Polycarp to the apostle John (*Against Heresies* 3.1–3).

In these times a bishop had no power to chastise a rival congregation or to suppress a dissenting book. The meretricious acts of Mark the Mage, who purported to turn the wine of the eucharist into real blood, could be deplored but not prohibited. Serapion, Theophilus’ predecessor as Bishop of Antioch, forbade those under his charge to read a gospel dubiously ascribed to Peter (Eusebius, *Church History* 6.12); elsewhere he could impose no ban, though it seems that the Church already possessed an excellent postal service which enabled him to apprise his fellow-bishops of the danger. Nevertheless the *Gospel of Peter* survived for a time, while Gnostic texts were still current in the fourth century. The *Gospel of Nicodemus*, which describes the descent of Christ to hell and his rescue of the saints (Elliott (1993) 165–205), supplied motifs to ‘catholic’ literature and art for a thousand years. In Irenaeus, then, we see no more than the template for a magisterium, the nucleus of a prospective orthodoxy.

7. Epilogue

We cannot hope to ascertain how many adherents each religion boasted in this period. Judaism was generally inherited rather than chosen, and the spread of

‘Oriental’ cults often coincides with patterns of migration. It is generally assumed that Christian numbers grew, though we do not possess either artifacts or literary evidence which would allow us to gauge the expansion; as records of public evangelism are few, it may be assumed that most conversions would be discreet, and that the principal cause of increase was the transmission of the faith from parents to children in close-knit families, which were seldom depleted either by abortion or by infanticide. Calculations based upon the growth of religious sects in industrial nations of the west (Stark (1996); Hopkins (1998)) may not be comparing like with like; if we wish to see how a creed may prosper when it is not opposed by others which dispense the same consolations, we might do better to compare the Christian population of South Korea today with that of 50 years ago. There was no ‘conflict of religions’ (Glover (1923)) in antiquity, if by this we mean that each was striving for absolute dominion over the life and consciousness of its devotees; to have sampled a number of cults like Apuleius (*Apology* 55) was to show oneself a man of means in what is now called the ‘religious market-place’. To Celsus Christianity was rough ware, coveted only by the servile and the ignorant (Origen, *Against Celsus* 3.49); its litigants could reply that this cheap philosophy was the most expensive of priesthoods, purchasable by all at the cost of everything. What fraction of the Church is represented by the apologists of Marcus’ reign we cannot say, but theirs were the times in which the Church became audible enough to occasion scandal, though it still appeared weak enough to be harried with impunity.

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CHAPTER 13

The Wars and Revolts

Anthony R. Birley

1. The Parthian War

The kings with whom the dying Pius had been angry (*HA Antoninus Pius* 12.7) were those in the east. Pius was clearly aware that Vologaeses III of Parthia was planning war (*HA Marcus* 8.6) and had already ordered the legate of one of the Syrian legions, Neratius Proculus, to bring reinforcements to Syria (Weiss (2007)). But these may have been inadequate or arrived too late. News of Pius' death seems to have emboldened Vologaeses to send an army into Armenia and replace its king with his own nominee, Pacorus. The nearest Roman commander, M. Sedatius Severianus, governor of Cappadocia, moved east with one legion. According to Lucian, Severianus was one of the high-ranking victims of the oracle-vendor Alexander of Abonuteichus, who led him to believe that he could deal with the invasion easily and win military glory. But he was trapped at Elegeia. Realizing that resistance was futile, after a three-day siege he committed suicide and the legion was 'wiped out' (*PIR*² S 306; Lucian, *Alexander* 27; Xiphilinus 259; Dio 71.2.1). The legion is not named by Xiphilinus, but might have been IX Hispana, last attested at York under Trajan and in the early second century at Nijmegen; but perhaps transferred first to Judaea by Hadrian, then to Cappadocia, when the Alans were threatening (Birley (2005) 228–29). Before long the Parthians invaded Syria as well: the governor L. Attidius Cornelianus was defeated and put to flight. There were serious problems on other frontiers too. War 'threatened in Britain', in spite of the evacuation of the Antonine Wall. The province had just been given to Statius Priscus (*PIR*² S 880); but now it was decided to move him to Cappadocia to replace the fallen Severianus. To succeed Priscus Calpurnius Agricola was transferred to Britain, from Upper Germany, itself under

threat from the Chatti beyond the *limes*; that province was entrusted to Marcus' close friend Aufidius Victorinus, Fronto's son-in-law (*HA Marcus* 8.7–8). In his *Strategica*, dedicated to Marcus and Lucius in 162, Polyaeus refers to 'the Britons being defeated' (6, *pr.*), presumably by Calpurnius Agricola.

By the winter of 161/2, with the people of Syria reported to be rebellious, it was decided that one emperor must direct the counter-attack in person. Neither had been given military experience under Pius, but it was agreed that Lucius, being 'physically robust and younger than Marcus, was better suited to military activity' (Xiphilinus 258; Dio 71.1.3). The *HA* suggests other motives: Marcus sent Lucius

so that he would not transgress in the city before the eyes of all, or so that he might learn thrift by foreign travel, or so that he might return reformed by the fear which war inspires, or so that he might realise that he was an emperor. (*HA Verus* 5.8)

Lucius finally set off in summer 162, with a massive entourage, accompanied as far as Capua by Marcus. Progress was slow: Lucius hunted and feasted at country estates, then fell ill at Canusium, where Marcus rushed south to see him. Three days of fasting and a bloodletting evidently cured him and he embarked from Brundisium. His journey though Greece, accompanied by musicians, was uncomfortably reminiscent of Nero, whose birthday (and allegedly some other tastes) Lucius shared. At Athens he stayed with Herodes Atticus and, unlike Nero, but following the precedents of Augustus and Hadrian, was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries. Then he took ship to Asia and proceeded to Antioch by the coast of Pamphylia and Cilicia, dallying on the way in pleasure resorts, the biographer claims (*HA Marcus* 11–12; *HA Verus* 6.7–9).

Meanwhile Statius Priscus had taken command in Cappadocia and campaigned vigorously. He took the Armenian capital Artaxata by storm in 163 (*HA Marcus* 9.1; cf. *HA Verus* 7.1) and founded a new one, which he garrisoned (Dio 71.3.1¹, from the *Suda*). Lucius assumed the title Armeniacus (which Marcus at first declined) and he and Marcus were acclaimed *Imperator II*. According to Lucian, in one of the instant histories produced just after the war, readers were told how 'Priscus the general merely shouted out and twenty-seven of the enemy dropped dead' (*How to Write History* 20). Lucius himself mainly stayed at Antioch, but spent part of the winter at Laodicea and the summer months at Daphne, the famous pleasure resort. He acquired a mistress, no ordinary 'low-born girl-friend' as the *HA* unkindly described her (*Verus* 7.1–10). The lady was called Panthea and came from Smyrna, one of the Ionian Greek cities on the coast of the province of Asia. She was portrayed by the

normally biting satirist Lucian in rapturous terms: ‘a woman of perfect beauty’, exceeding any statue by Phidias or Praxiteles, with a ‘soft, delicious and winning voice’. She sang wonderfully well to the lyre, spoke pure Ionic Greek flavored with Attic wit, possessed the gifts of all the Muses, had a shrewd understanding of public affairs and a gracious, loving, and modest nature. Panthea reproached the author for being too flattering (Lucian, *Imagines*, *Pro imaginibus*). It is not surprising that in 164 Lucilla, Lucius’ intended bride, just 14 years old, was dispatched by Marcus to Ephesus, where the marriage was celebrated: Lucilla was given the title Augusta (Birley (1987) 131).

There was plenty of work to do in Syria, at first particularly in the training of troops. The army of the province had apparently become slack from long years of peace. Fortunately Lucius had experienced senior advisers with him, *comites Augusti* of consular rank. A cousin of Marcus, Marcus Annius Libo, was initially made governor of Syria, evidently to keep an eye on Lucius; but he died before long (*HA Verus* 9.2) and was replaced by Gnaeus Julius Verus, a former governor of Britain, who was the son of Hadrian’s greatest general, Sextus Julius Severus (Birley (2005) 145ff.). Measures taken by one *comes*, M. Pontius Laelianus, ‘a man of weight and old-style discipline’, to bring the Syrian army back into condition, are described by Fronto: in his kit inspections he ordered troopers’ padded saddles to be slit open, and he jumped down heavily on drinking and gambling (Fronto, *Ad Verum imp.* 2.1.19). But according to Fronto, Lucius also took things personally in hand,

marching on foot at the head of his men as often as he rode on horseback, putting up with the blazing sun and choking dust, his head exposed to sun and shower, hail and snow – and to missiles. He sweated unconcernedly as if engaged in sport. He inspected soldiers in the field and their quarters in camp, including the sick-bay . . . He took a belated bath after his work was done and ate simple camp-food, drank local wine. Often he slept on leaves or turf. Through so many provinces, so many open dangers of sieges, battles, citadels, posts and forts stormed, he lavished his care and his advice.

This panegyric was written several years later, when the war was virtually over (Fronto, *Princ. Hist.* 13–15 = vdH² 210, 1–211, 10). But it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Lucius actually remained largely a figurehead.

While Priscus was occupying Armenia, the Parthians invaded Osrhoene, the Roman client-kingdom in north-western Mesopotamia, deposing the pro-Roman ruler Mannus. Roman forces were now moved across the Euphrates further downstream. Dausara and Nicephorium on the northern, Parthian bank were occupied, after an engagement at Sura on the Roman side of the river – which suggests that Parthian forces had not been evicted from Syria in 163.

But before long Roman troops entered Osrhoene from Armenia and occupied Anthemusia, south-west of Edessa. This force was led by Marcus Claudius Fronto, a man of Greek origin, who had been serving under Priscus after conducting the Bonn legion I Minervia to the front. Another of Priscus' legionary legates was Publius Martius Verus, a man of 'winning personality'. He had brought the legion V Macedonica from its base on the Lower Danube. But the key role was already being taken by a young Syrian senator, from Cyrrhus, Gaius Avidius Cassius. Cassius' father Heliodorus, although not a senator, had held important posts under Hadrian, including that of *ab epistulis*, in which capacity he had accompanied Hadrian to Egypt, where Cassius was born, and was later prefect of that province (Birley (1987) 130).

The year 164 evidently saw something of a lull in the fighting, which no doubt made it easier for Lucius to go to Ephesus for his wedding. Apart from this, he crowned a pro-Roman prince, Sohaemus, with Arsacid (royal Parthian) family connections, as king of Armenia, as registered on the coinage with the legend *rex Armeniis datus*, and Marcus now accepted the title Armeniacus. Sohaemus was indeed a member of the senate and had even been consul, so must have been living at Rome as an exile for some years (*PIR*² S 761). In 165 there was a major Roman push into Mesopotamia. First, in the north the pro-Roman Mannus was restored to the throne of Osrhoene. Then the Parthians were pursued eastwards to Nisibis, which was captured, and their general Chosroes only escaped by swimming the Tigris. A force under Avidius Cassius advanced down the Euphrates, winning a victory at Dura-Europus, an originally Greek city re-fortified by the Parthians, which was now annexed. By the end of the year Cassius and his men moved across Mesopotamia at its narrowest point to assault the twin cities on the Tigris, the Greek Seleucia on the right bank and the Parthian capital opposite, Ctesiphon. Seleucia opened its gates to welcome the Romans. This must have made it much easier for Cassius to complete the victory by capturing Ctesiphon and burning Vologaeses' palace. Laurelled dispatches were sent to Rome: Lucius was awarded the title Parthicus maximus, while he and Marcus took a further salutation as *imperator*. Although Cassius seems to have had the lion's share of the glory, other young generals also played a part, notably Claudius Fronto, Martius Verus, and a man from Numidia, Quintus Antistius Adventus, who had commanded two legions in succession and stayed on in the east as governor of Arabia (Alföldy (1977) 179ff.). Yet Cassius had blackened Rome's reputation by permitting his men to sack Seleucia, allegedly in response to its people 'breaking faith first'. The 'plague' – an epidemic which was probably smallpox – which first broke out among the Roman forces at Seleucia, was soon said to be divine retribution (Birley (1987) 140).

By the end of 165 the war was now virtually over. Two key figures, Julius Verus and Claudius Fronto, were now sent back to the west and received an

important mission, the raising of two new legions, intended for service in the north (Birley (1987) 142f.). It was recognized that there was a serious threat from beyond the Danube. 'While the Parthian war was being waged the Marcomannic war broke out ... held in check by the skill of the men on the spot' (*HA Marcus* 12.13). Writing at this time, Appian, in the preface to his *History* (*Praef.* 7) recalls seeing 'envoys from poor and unprofitable peoples at Rome, offering themselves as subjects; but the emperor [evidently Antoninus Pius] would not accept men who would be no use to him'. Pressure on the frontiers was increasing. The *HA* shows that this was becoming a real problem: 'peoples which had fled under pressure from the remoter barbarians were threatening war unless they were taken into the empire' (*Marcus* 14.1). Iallius Bassus, another *comes* of Lucius, was also sent back to the west, in his case to govern the key Danubian province of Upper Pannonia. At latest by spring 167, Tiberius Claudius Pompeianus, a native of Antioch, who had achieved the consulship in 162 (unpublished diploma) and had probably been serving in the east, was appointed governor of Lower Pannonia, a province that was normally of junior rank, but was evidently to receive an enlarged legionary garrison (Birley (1987) 142f.).

As for Lucius, he commissioned Fronto to produce a suitably laudatory history of the war, which he began enthusiastically, composing a long Preface, but never completed – it is assumed that he died not long before Lucius returned to Rome (Champlin (1980) 139ff.). Lucius was evidently reluctant to leave Syria, which had felt like his own kingdom. In 166 there was one more campaign, a final demonstration of Roman superiority, with Avidius Cassius taking Rome's arms beyond the Tigris into Media. This led to the conferring of the title *Medicus* on the emperors and a fourth imperial acclamation. With the war over, Martius Verus and Avidius Cassius, who had both been made consul unusually early, stayed on to govern Cappadocia and Syria respectively (Birley (1987) 144ff.).

The war had not resulted in significant extension of Rome's borders, except for the city of Dura-Europus. All the same, an inscription at Ostia gave Lucius the unofficial title of *propagator imperii*, 'extender of the empire' (*CIL* XIV 106). The triumph, which was certainly deserved as much as that awarded to Trajan, was celebrated jointly by Marcus and Lucius, on October 12, 166. Both now accepted the title *pater patriae*, and, at Lucius' request, Marcus' sons, the surviving twin, Commodus, and his little brother Annius Verus, were made Caesars (Birley (1987) 147). An unfortunate by-product of the return of troops, notably elements of the praetorian guard, was that they brought the 'plague' with them. People believed that this was Apollo's vengeance – Cassius' men had sacked his temple at Seleucia – and that god was, among other attributes, the 'plague-bringer' (Birley (1987) 149f.).

2. The First ‘Marcomannic’ War

Meanwhile there was pressing business. Marcus made it plain in the senate that both emperors would have to go on expedition to the north, where the situation was reaching the predicted breaking point (*HA Marcus* 12.14). The Germanic peoples immediately beyond the frontier were being subjected to unbearable pressure from their wilder neighbors to the north. It seems likely that the long migration of the Goths, which was to take them from the Baltic to the Black Sea, had begun, creating a snowball movement (Birley (1987) 148ff.). In 166 or 167, the first wave, ‘six thousand Langobardi and Obii’, broke into Pannonia. They were checked by a mixed force of auxiliary cavalry, commanded by Vindex (*PIR*² M 22), and infantry, commanded by Candidus. Soon after, a delegation of 11 peoples, led by Ballomarius, king of the Marcomanni, arrived, and sued for peace, which Iallius Bassus, legate of Upper Pannonia (*PIR*² I 4), granted (Dio 71[72].3.1^a). The fighting in the Danube area which lasted, with an intermission in 175–6, until Marcus’ death in 180, was to be known as the Marcomannic War. But the *HA* said that it should really be called the ‘war of many nations’ (*Marcus* 22.7), and that ‘all the peoples from beyond Rhine and Danube conspired against Rome’ (22.1). Marcus no doubt intended that he and Lucius should take immediate personal charge of counter-measures, but the increasing virulence of the plague made it impossible for them to leave Rome: ‘the dead were carted away on carts and wagons . . . thousands died, including many prominent persons’. There was a hysterical atmosphere in the city, supposedly ‘from the terror of the war with the Marcomanni’, which was no doubt exacerbated by the plague. Priests were summoned, special religious rites performed and the city purified (*HA Marcus* 13.1ff.). The great doctor Galen, at Rome in 166, left for his home city Pergamum to avoid infection (14.648; 19.15–17). It may have been as a result of the public panic and the religious rituals that anti-Christian agitation broke out, leading to the conviction and martyrdom of Justin. The magistrate who sentenced him and his companions was the prefect of the city, Marcus’ revered mentor Junius Rusticus (cf. Chapter 9 in this volume).

By 168 the Marcomanni and others ‘were throwing everything into confusion, threatening war unless they were allowed into the empire’. The ‘German expedition’ was finally launched by Marcus and Lucius that year: their arrival at Aquileia evidently caused ‘most of the kings, with their peoples, to withdraw’. The Quadi, in what is now Slovakia, always one of the most important peoples, had been defeated; their king had lost his life and they were anxious for Rome to approve his successor, as in the old days. Other peoples retreated and their rulers put to death those responsible for disturbing the peace. Lucius felt that enough had been achieved, but Marcus insisted on pressing ahead. They

therefore, ‘after the Alps had been crossed, proceeded further and settled everything pertaining to the protection of Italy and Illyricum’. The ‘protection of Italy and Illyricum’ surely refers to the special command known to have been held by Antistius Adventus over the *praetentura Italiae et Alpium*, to protect the passes through the Julian Alps from Pannonia into Italy (although Adventus was not necessarily the first or only holder of this command) (Birley (1987) 251). Marcus and Lucius took up winter-quarters at Aquileia, evidently planning a spring offensive. But in midwinter the prevalence of plague in the camp – with large numbers of dead, including the Guard Prefect Furius Victorinus – led Galen, who had by now rejoined the imperial entourage, to recommend returning to Rome. This was in any case being urged by Lucius. But after two days’ journey Lucius suffered a seizure in his carriage and died three days later, evidently in January 169 (*HA Marcus* 14.1–6; *HA Verus* 9.7–11).

Marcus carried out the funeral ceremonies at once and had Lucius deified as *divus Verus*. Now he had to deal with the situation on his own (Birley (1987) 159ff.). The heavy losses had caused a financial crisis, to which he responded by auctioning palace treasures, rather than raising new taxes. The sale lasted for two months and caught the imagination of later chroniclers, who give details of the items sold, including gold, crystal, and myrrhine drinking vessels and Faustina’s silk and gold-embroidered clothing (Eutropius 8.13; *Epitome de Caesaribus* 16.9–10; *HA Marcus* 17.4–5, 21.9). As a further economy measure, from 167 onwards for the next 10 years no bronze diplomas were issued to veterans of the guard, the fleets, and the *auxilia* (Eck (2003) 61, 81ff.). High casualties meant a recruitment crisis: new auxiliary regiments were formed; slaves were given their freedom if they volunteered to serve as soldiers; even gladiators and ‘brigands’ were conscripted, as were the police forces maintained by the Greek cities (*HA Marcus* 21.6–7). Before the end of the year he had to return to the north, where the situation was worsening. Before he set out,

although the official mourning had not ended, he gave his daughter Lucilla in marriage to Claudius Pompeianus, son of a Roman knight from Antioch, who was of an advanced age and not of sufficiently noble birth.

Another blow to Marcus was the death of his younger son Annius Verus Caesar in mid-September: he was mourned for only five days (*HA Marcus* 20.6–7, 21.3–5). The war urgently demanded Marcus’ presence: he left in the autumn of 169 and was to be away from Rome for over seven years.

The precise chronology of events in 169, as indeed of the whole war, is very obscure, but there seems little doubt that heavy fighting had been going on, concentrated in the Hungarian Plain. During this year the governor of Dacia, which had just been reunited, with an additional legion and placed under a consular governor, must have died suddenly, and Claudius Fronto, who was by

then governing the neighboring Upper Moesia, took over first part of Dacia and before long the whole of the 'Three Dacias' (Piso (1993) 82ff.). Marcus was not accompanied by Faustina, who may well have been pregnant yet again. Her last known child was apparently born in 170, a daughter, Vibia Aurelia Sabina (Birley (1987) 248). There may have been anxiety about the health of Commodus. Marcus had hoped to take the doctor Galen with him, but, as Galen recorded, 'I was able to persuade him, good-natured and charitable as he was, to leave me at Rome – for indeed, he was going to return soon'. This optimistic forecast is useful confirmation that the major disaster of the war had not yet occurred. Commodus' *educator* Pitholaus was instructed to send for Galen should the boy fall ill (Galen 19.19, 14.649–50).

The location of Marcus' headquarters for the winter of 169/70 is not directly recorded. It may well have been at Sirmium on the River Save, as the main fighting had been beyond the nearby Danube frontier. The events of 170 and the years that followed are nowhere fully recorded and any account must be in great part hypothetical. The delayed Roman offensive across the Danube opened in spring 170, but it appears to have met with disaster, if we may believe the story in Lucian's *Alexander* (48): 'the Romans lost twenty thousand men – then followed what happened with Aquileia and the city's narrow escape from capture'. The siege of Aquileia is mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus, in a passage about the Quadi of the late fourth century: he recalled how 'they and the Marcomanni had burst through the Julian Alps to besiege Aquileia for a long time and sack Opitergium, with the pious emperor Marcus barely able to resist' (*HA Marcus* 29.6.1). These two main eastern German peoples must have outflanked the main Roman forces. It was the first foreign invasion of Italy for nearly 300 years.

Dio's epitomator Xiphilinus also reports the barbarian invasion of Italy and its repulse by Pompeianus and Pertinax (Xiphilinus 259; Dio 71[72].3.2–4). As Xiphilinus had no text of Dio for the period before Lucius' death, this confirms that the invasion was later than this. The only apparent difficulty is Xiphilinus' expression referring to the invaders as 'also many of the Celts from beyond the Rhine'. 'Celts', as often in Greek writers, means 'Germans', and Dio or perhaps Xiphilinus probably just added 'from beyond the Rhine' to distinguish them from the Gauls: this did not mean that the invaders actually came from that area (see Zwicker (1941) 156f.). There is no reason to doubt that the invasion was that by the Marcomanni and Quadi. As to date, comparison with the *HA*'s treatment of Pertinax's role makes the year 170 far likelier, *Pertinax* 2.4–5:

From there ... he [Pertinax] was transferred to Dacia ... and subsequently, through Claudius Pompeianus, Marcus' son-in-law, was appointed, to be, as it were, his assistant, to command detachments; in which post he won approval and was enrolled into the senate.

An equestrian officer from Poetovio in Pannonia, Marcus Valerius Maximianus, was put in command of a task force of marines from several fleets, with strong cavalry support, to conduct supplies for the Pannonian provinces down the Danube (Pflaum (1961) no. 181 *bis*). From the data in Pertinax's *vita*, his post in Dacia, which preceded his service under Pompeianus and was followed by a period without employment, can hardly be dated earlier than 169 (Alföldy (1987) 326ff.; Piso (1993) 117ff.). Above all, analysis of the coinage of the year 170 makes it even more likely that the invasion took place in the spring of that year (Scheidel (1990a)). An interesting detail in the brief account by Dio-Xiphilinus is that 'among the barbarian dead were found even the bodies of women wearing armour'.

It was presumably in this same year Claudius Fronto lost his life, 'fighting to the last in defence of the commonwealth' (Piso (1993) 100ff.). It is no surprise that Salonae, chief city of Dalmatia, was given fortifications in that year, built by detachments from the two newly raised legions, II and III Italica (*CIL* III 1979f., 6374). Marcus probably spent the winter of 170/1 moving from place to place. But in 171 he moved his headquarters to Carnuntum on the Danube. He had clearly decided to concentrate on the Marcomanni and Quadi. During 171 the invaders were trapped at the river crossing as they attempted to make their escape, laden with booty – which Marcus could duly 'return to the provincials'. He was hailed as *imperator* for the sixth time, as is recorded on the coinage in late 171, which also hails the 'German victory' (*HA Marcus* 21.10; Birley (1987) 165ff.). Although Marcus accepted the acclamation, the first he had won in person, he refused the troops' request for a donative, 'saying that whaver they got from him over and above their regular pay would be wrung from the blood of their parents and families' (Dio 71[72].3.3). In the same year,

Marcus stayed in Pannonia to receive the barbarian embassies, for many came to him at that time, some of which, led by a twelve-year-old boy named Battarius, promised alliance. They were given money and managed to restrain Tarbus, chieftain of a neighbouring people, who had entered Dacia demanding money and threatening war if it were not given. Others asked for peace, like the Quadi, which was granted in the hope that they could be detached from the Marcomanni ... Many others sent envoys ... offering to surrender. Some were sent on campaigns elsewhere, as were captives and deserters who were fit; others were given land in Dacia, Pannonia, Moesia, Germany and Italy itself – but some of those settled at Ravenna revolted and even dared to try to seize the city. For this reason Marcus did not bring any barbarians into Italy again, but even banished those who had come there previously. (Dio 71[72].11.1–5)

In the meantime, probably in reaction to Rome's weakness which the invasion of Italy had revealed, another invasion from the north had taken

place, by the Costoboci from beyond Dacia (in modern Moldova). They struck into the Balkans and tore through the provinces of Moesia, Macedonia, and Achaia, reaching Attica, where they destroyed the shrine of the Mysteries at Eleusis before their attack spent itself. Athens was lucky to escape (Scheidel (1990b)). An equestrian procurator, Julius Julianus, was given a task force to clear these provinces, and shortly afterwards had to take his men to the far west, where southern Spain had been invaded by the Moors from across the straits, another reaction to events in northern Italy, one may suspect (Pflaum (1961) no. 180). Marcus' old friend Aufidius Victorinus, who was governor of Tarraconensis, took over the normally peaceful and undefended southernmost Spanish province of Baetica as well. Soon after this the eastern provinces were also affected. In the Nile delta there was an uprising of the 'herdsmen' (Bucoli), so serious that Avidius Cassius had to be sent from Syria to suppress it. In Armenia the Roman imposed king, Sohaemus, was deposed, and Martius Verus, governor of Cappadocia, had to intervene to re-install him (Dio 71.3.1², 71[72].4.1–2, 71.3.1¹; *HA Marcus* 21.2; *PIR*² S 761).

Marcus' long-postponed offensive could now begin, but the truncated state of Dio's text, as well as the confused nature of the *HA* biography of Marcus at this point, make it hard to follow the course of events. A further complication is created by the Aurelian Column, with its spiral reliefs illustrating the wars. Because neither Lucius Verus nor Commodus seem to be depicted, it is mostly assumed that the events covered the period from at earliest 169 to at latest 175. But the latter date is open to question, as the Column's 116 scenes are separated halfway through (at scene 55) by the goddess Victoria with two trophies. The natural interpretation is that the first half went up to 175, when the 'first expedition' ended (the delayed triumph being celebrated in late 177), with the upper half covering the last two years' campaigning. The beginning is less easy to date. The famous 'Rain Miracle', that supposedly rescued Roman troops in enemy territory, is prominent low down on the Column, at scene 16. According to Dio (or Xiphilinus, who embroidered Dio's version to give Christian soldiers the credit for the miracle), it was following this event that Marcus was acclaimed as emperor for the seventh time (Dio 71[72].8.1–10.5). Marcus' title IMP VII can be independently dated to 174. Most have been unwilling to accept the implication that the Column only covers the years 174–75 in the first half and 178–79 in the second half. That dating has been argued powerfully by Wolff ((1990), (1994)), but is difficult to reconcile with the coins from 172, showing an *adlocutio*, marking the opening of a new campaign, and one with the inscription *virtus Aug(usti)*, 'the emperor's valor', showing Roman troops crossing a bridge – precisely the scene at the opening of the Column. Marcus evidently accepted the title Germanicus by the end of 172, but took no further acclamations until 174 (Birley (1987) 171). The fighting

was not all in Rome's favor. In one battle 'the Marcomanni were successful and killed Marcus Vindex the prefect (of the Guard)' (Dio 71[72].3.5).

Not much can be made of the headings between Books 1 and 2 of Marcus' *Meditations*, 'Among the Quadi, on the Granua' [the Gran or Hron, a northern tributary of the Danube], and between 2 and 3, 'This at Carnuntum'. All they can suggest is that Books 2 and 3 were written in 172 and 173, because in 174 Marcus moved his headquarters to Sirmium, from which he launched the second phase of the war, against the Sarmatian Jazyges. The Sarmatians are named in one of the later books of the *Meditations*, the only other direct reference to the war:

A spider takes pride in catching a fly, and one man in catching a hare, another a little fish in a net, another wild boars, another bears and another Sarmatians – aren't these brigands, if you test their principles? (*Meditations* 10.10)

Here it should be noted, first, that 'if you test your principles' is rather odd and may in fact belong with the next section, as in one manuscript. More important, what is here rendered as 'aren't these brigands' has almost always been translated as 'aren't they all brigands' – which implies that Marcus included himself. This view is expressed in the most extreme form by R. Häußler:

The same man who had to fight against the Sarmatians – in the end very successfully – denounced himself in unmistakeably pejorative fashion as a 'Sarmatian-catcher'. Even for a Stoic on the imperial throne that is out of the ordinary. (Häußler (1995) 147)

But the word for 'all' is not there in the Greek, rather the word *(h)outoi*, 'these', ought to mean 'the latter'. In other words Marcus wrote: 'For are not the latter [the Sarmatians] brigands?' This may or may not reproduce his personal view; he might just be indicating what is thought by *allos* (another) who takes pride in catching Sarmatians. For the view to have been expressed, at the time that Marcus was writing, that Sarmatians were brigands, is in no way surprising. A few years later numerous inscriptions proclaimed that Commodus, through the governor of Pannonia Inferior, 'fortified the entire river-bank with towers built from the ground up and garrisons at suitable places against clandestine crossings by brigands' (*ILS* 395, 8913, etc.). The brigands (*latrunculi*) against whom these measures were taken can only have been the Sarmatae Iazyges, who occupied the land on the left bank of the river. A century and a half later the Sarmatae (together with their Germanic neighbors the Quadi) still had this reputation, that went back a long way, as Ammianus Marcellinus commented: 'they do not rely on direct battle but are accustomed

to carry out secret acts of brigandage ... having been a source of fear to our ancestors' (17.13.27, cf. 17.12.1). In any case, it is by no means certain that Marcus thought of himself as a 'Sarmatian-catcher'. One may note the comment by P.A. Brunt on this passage:

The reference to a man capturing Sarmatians ... may have been prompted by recollection of a report, not necessarily recent, from a general who boasted of the number of his prisoners, and need not be connected in time with Marcus' personal operations against the Iazyges (Sarmatians) or assumption of the title Sarmaticus in 175. (Brunt (1974) 19)

3. The Rebellion of Avidius Cassius, AD 175 and Its Aftermath

The *HA* asserts that Marcus' plan was to annex the territory of the most dangerous peoples beyond the middle Danube, creating new provinces, *Marcomannia* and *Sarmatia* (*Marcus* 24.5, 27.10). Dio denied that Marcus had such intentions (Dio 71[72].20.1–2) and modern scholars also find it hard to believe that the philosopher emperor could have been an expansionist (notably Hampl (1960); Alföldy (1971)). However, in early summer 175, he was obliged by an unexpected event abruptly to close campaigning. Avidius Cassius, the hero of the Parthian War, who had been governing Syria since 166, had been proclaimed emperor. The likeliest explanation is that he was misled by a false report of Marcus' death. Once this step had been taken, he could not back down, and was recognized in Syria, his native province, Egypt, and some other parts of the east. But Martius Verus, governor of Cappadocia, remained loyal (Birley (1987) 184f.).

Marcus summoned his only surviving son, Commodus, now aged 13, to the front, where the *toga virilis* was conferred on him. Faustina was also with Marcus and was given the title of 'mother of the camps', *mater castrorum*. Marcus himself assumed the title Sarmaticus, and the Sarmatians were given a peace treaty; they and the eastern Germans had to supply large numbers of young men to serve in Rome's armies – a massive number, 5 500 out of 8 000 Sarmatians, were sent to Britain (Dio 71[72].16–17, 22–23), either to keep them as far away from home as possible or because there was again trouble in Britain. Then, with his wife and son and a large expeditionary force, Marcus set off for the east. Well before he reached the affected area the usurper was dead, killed by one of his own men after 'a dream of empire' lasting for three months (Birley (1987) 184ff.). It still seemed desirable for Marcus to tour the eastern provinces, not least Syria and Egypt. On the journey through the Taurus mountains, Faustina died, at a place called Halala in Cilicia. They had been

married for 30 years and she had borne at least 14 children, of which Commodus and five daughters survived her (Birley (1987) 191; Weiss (2008)). On the return journey Marcus and Commodus were initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries. They reached Rome at the end of 176. Marcus had been away for over seven years. Commodus held the consulship in 177 and was raised to the rank of Augustus; there were once more two co-emperors. A little later he was found a bride, Bruttia Crispina (Birley (1987) 194ff.).

4. The Second ‘Marcomannic’ War, AD 178–80

Meanwhile warfare on the Danube had resumed. Victories were won by the Quintilii cousins, who were governing the two Pannonian provinces, for which Marcus accepted a ninth acclamation, ‘but they could not end the war’. On August 3, 178 Marcus had to leave for the front again, taking Commodus with him, on the ‘second German expedition’. In 179 the Guard Prefect Taruttienus Paternus won a victory, for which Marcus took his 10th and last acclamation. The Jazyges were granted some concessions and Marcus received delegations from various other peoples (Birley (1987) 205ff.). Twenty thousand men each were now stationed in the lands of the Quadi and Marcomanni, where they wintered in forts with bath-houses and all amenities (Dio 71[72].20.1–2). An inscription from Trenčín in Slovakia, of which the ancient name was Leugaricio, records that Valerius Maximianus was wintering there, 120 km beyond the Danube, in command of a detachment of over 800 men (Pflaum (1961) no. 180 *bis*). The *HA* insists that the plan was still, or once again, to annex new provinces (*Marcus* 27.10). Dio denied Marcus’ intention to annex the land of the Quadi (Dio 71[72].20.2), but he clearly knew that there had been such a plan. A medallion of Marcus and Commodus calls them *propagatores imperii*, ‘extenders of the empire’ (Birley (1987) 253ff.).

It is true that the heavy casualties and resultant depopulation in the long-existing frontier provinces, together with the plague, might justify skepticism about plans for further annexation. But the attempt to control the peoples beyond the frontier by traditional means had failed, and new archaeological evidence, obtained mainly by air photography, reveals almost 30 Roman sites in the lands of the Marcomanni and Quadi. The northernmost camp, near Brno, is circa 130 km beyond the Danube. In southern Moravia, the Mušov fortress had defenses covering some 40 ha. Hence around the year 180, northern Austria beyond the Danube, southern Moravia, and western Slovakia present the picture of a province in the making, under military occupation – as was Germany east of the Rhine during the governorship of Varus. One need not claim that Marcomannia was to have included all Bohemia and Moravia up to the Erzgebirge, the Riesengebirge, and the Beskiden (the northern part of the

western Carpathians), or that Sarmatia was to have covered the whole Great Hungarian Plain from the Danube to the Carpathians. The borders of the intended province of Sarmatia cannot even be guessed at. What was probably envisaged for Marcomannia was the land between the Danube and southern Bohemia as far as Strakonice (midway between Prague and Passau) and Tábor (circa 60 km south of Prague on the main road to Vienna) in the north, in Moravia to some way north of Brno and in Slovakia as far as the White Carpathians. This would have been comparable to the Flavian extension of the frontier beyond the Upper Rhine, the Decumates Agri. The Hermunduri referred to in *HA Marcus* 27.10 will have been the Danubian Hermunduri immediately north of the Raetian Limes, not the 'Elbe-Hermunduri' (Johne (2006) 248f.; Birley (2010)). These boundaries would have taken Marcomannia in the west to the Danube at Regensburg, where one of the new legions, III Italica, was now based. Germania Superior and Raetia formed a united command from the 170s until after Marcus' death, making a three-legion province (Dietz (1989)).

Marcus did not have an inflated idea of his own worth: 'If anyone can prove and convince me that an idea or action of mine is wrong, I will gladly amend it – I seek the truth, which never harmed anyone' (*Meditations* 6.21); 'If you can see your course, take it gladly, and do not turn aside; if not, suspend judgement and use the best men to advise you' (10.12, cf. 8.16). These memoranda to himself are confirmed by the *HA*:

Before taking action, he always consulted with the leading men, not only on matters of war but on civilian affairs too, indeed he used to say: 'It is fairer that I should follow the advice of so many and such good friends than that they should follow the wishes of a single man'. Certainly, because he seemed hard, from his devotion to philosophy, both in his military discipline and in his whole way of life, he was bitterly criticised. But he answered all his critics in speeches or pamphlets.

The biographer adds, however, that 'because many noblemen had lost their lives in the war, Marcus' friends urged him to abandon it and return to Rome. But this advice he disregarded and stood firm' (*HA Marcus* 22.4, 7–8). Even if his plan to annex new provinces was given up by Commodus, at least there was no serious trouble on the Rhine and Danube frontiers for many decades.

FURTHER READING

For the Parthian War there are not many recent detailed publications, but see Weiss (2007), Fündling (2009). There is a substantial literature, some of it very recent, almost all of it in German, on the Marcomannic wars, of which the following may be

mentioned: Alföldy ((1977) and (1987), on leading generals), Burian (1987), Dietz (1989), Friesinger et al. (1994), Kehne (2001), Kovács (2009), Piso ((1991), correcting mistaken readings of inscriptions wrongly claimed to attest Marcus' presence at Carnuntum), Piso ((1993), on several of the leading generals), Scheidel ((1990a) and (1990b), on the chronology of the invasion of Italy), Tejral ((2001) and (2002)), Wolff ((1990) and (1994)), Zwickler (1941). In particular, on the still controversial question of Marcus Aurelius' plans regarding the lands north of the Danube see Alföldy ((1971) and revised versions, (1979), (1989)), Birley ((1966), (1971), (1974), (1979), (1987), and (2010)), Häußler (1995), Hampl (1960), John (2006), as well as some of the items in the foregoing list. The biographies in the *Historia Augusta*, abbreviated here *HA* (on which cf. Further reading and References for Chapter 1 in this volume), are cited here by the name of their subject, e.g. *Marcus, Verus, Avidius Cassius*, etc. But Marcus' adoptive brother, as emperor known as Lucius Verus, is generally referred to here as Lucius, rather than Verus, to avoid confusion with various Roman senators called Verus.

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CHAPTER 14

The Roman Empire after His Death

Olivier Hekster

1. The Aftermath of Marcus' Death

On 17 March AD 180, Marcus Aurelius died, probably in the city of Vindobona (modern Vienna), but possibly in Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia). It will have been clear to all that his son Commodus was to succeed him. After all, the latter had become Augustus in 176, and had also held *tribunicia potestas* from the end of that year onwards. In 177, furthermore, at the age of 15, he had become the youngest consul Rome had ever seen (Marino (1976) 225–39). Marcus' intentions were clear. His son should be emperor after him. Commodus was to be the first emperor 'born in the purple'; that is, born when his father was already emperor, and becoming sole ruler after his death. As Herodian had Commodus proclaim: 'No commoner's swaddling-clothes for me; the imperial purple awaited me the moment I was born. At the same moment the sun shone on me as man and emperor' (1.5.5). If there were any doubts, Marcus seems to have taken them away on his deathbed when, again according to Herodian, he commended his son to the troops, though reminding them of the temptations of youth:

Here is my son, whom you yourself brought up, who has just reached the age of adolescence and stands in need of guides through the tempest and storm of life . . . You who are many must be fathers to him in place of me alone . . . You must give my son this sort of advice and remind him of what he is hearing now. In this way you will provide yourselves and everyone else with an excellent emperor, and you will be showing your gratitude to my memory in the best of all ways. Indeed, it is the only way you can keep my memory alive for ever. (1.4.3–6)

As is well known, Commodus was somewhat haphazard in heeding the advice of his father's friends. He ended the fighting with Marcomanni and Quadi, against what seems to have been the recommendation of most of Marcus' military men, in particular the influential Claudius Pompeianus, husband to Commodus' sister and Lucius Verus' widow Lucilla (Grosso (1964) 10). Whatever Marcus' original intentions in fighting the frontier wars may have been, his son settled for peace. Ancient literary sources, sketching Commodus' reign in the bleakest possible terms, argue that the young emperor chose a life of luxury at the capital. The *Historia Augusta*, for instance, argued that Commodus 'gave up the war which his father had almost finished and submitted to the enemy's terms' (*Commodus* 3.5.; cf. Herodian 1.6). The choice for peace, in the eyes of Theodor Mommsen, was one of the turning points in Roman history. In a time in which the Empire was already under strain, Commodus was said to have thrown away the benefits of earlier fighting (Mommsen (1896) 28). Recent scholarship takes a more balanced point of view (Riemer (2006) 129–35; Burns (2003) 244). It emphasizes how the conditions of the treaty which Rome imposed upon the enemies were beneficial to Rome, for instance through forced recruitment of nearly 15 000 soldiers from the Quadi and Marcomanni, and an annual tribute of grain (Dio 73.3). The tribes, furthermore, had to give up weaponry and their ships, and had to keep away from the Danube. The treaty held for a long time, with no more serious threats reported from the area up to the middle of the third century (Millar (1982) 6–7, 15).

Continuing the frontier wars, or even trying to extend the empire, would also have brought with it the risk of overstretching the Empire. Even at the best of times waging wars was a costly affair, whereas the incorporating of new peoples into the Empire involved, amongst other things, the creation of a road network, buildings, and political institutions. Expenses which only later, if at all, could be compensated by possible profits from new territory. And these were not the best of times. Following Lucius Verus' campaigns in the East, the Empire had been struck by the so-called Antonine plague, which caused a dramatic fall in the amount of leased agricultural land, brick, and coin production (and related, the erection of public buildings), and inscriptions. More importantly, the result was an enormous loss of manpower; in AD 178/89, for instance, one-third of the taxpayers at Socnopaiou Nessos in Egypt died within two months (Duncan Jones (1996) 117, 121). Though it seems more difficult to assess the impact of the plague on Rome and the Italian peninsula, the West suffered too, and well into Commodus' reign (Bruun (2003); Jones (2005)). Perhaps apocryphally Commodus is said to have reacted to his father's wish to continue the war with the words 'tasks can be completed by a man in good health, if only gradually; a dead man can complete nothing' (*Epit. de Caes.* 17.2). Nor would it have been wise for

an emperor to continue fighting without great urgency if his troops were severely depleted. Add to that the risk for any new emperor – especially one without substantial victories to his name – of starting his reign with an ignominious defeat, and Commodus' choices may well have been more limited than our ancient sources lead us to believe. The emperor returned to Rome.

2. Emperor, Advisors, and Senators during Commodus' Reign

The return could have been handled better. Perhaps it was Commodus' youth and inexperience – he was after all still only 18 years old – but giving too prominent a position for his *cubicularius* Saoterus and a speech to the senate which, according to Cassius Dio, who had been there to witness it, consisted of 'a lot of trivialities' (Dio 73.4.2) hampered relations with senators from the beginning. Still, Commodus shared the first consulship of his sole reign with Lucius Antistius Burrus, a patrician consular son and his own brother-in-law. The consuls *ord.* of 182 were likewise sons of consuls. Apparently, however, there remained discontent. Fairly shortly after Commodus' return to Rome there was a plot against his life, in which the emperor's older sister Lucilla was involved. The precise details are disputed, but it seems that Claudius Pompeianus Quintianus aimed to kill Commodus at or near the Colosseum, only for the imperial bodyguard to overcome him. In a second part of the plot, Saoterus was executed, apparently under orders of the praetorian prefect Paternus, who was then relieved of his post and executed by the emperor. Others were put to death beside him, including former *amici* of Marcus (Herodian 1.8.4–6; Dio 73.4–5; *HA Commodus* 4). The emperor struck back at those who threatened his reign.

The next couple of years were dominated by Sextus Tigidius Perennis and Marcus Aurelius Cleander (the latter a freedman), who as main advisers to the emperor became extremely influential. The former may already have had a political position under Marcus, but was made praetorian prefect by Commodus sometime after the death of Paternus. He is described in wildly divergent terms by the different ancient authors writing about Commodus' reign, with Dio (73.10.1), who perhaps had been treated favorably, stating that Perennis strove to 'live a most incorruptible and temperate live', whereas Herodian (1.8.2) has him act out 'an uncontrollable desire for money' (Hekster (2002) 60–64). However he exercised his undoubted influence, he lost control in AD 185, possibly to appease senators, or because he had imperial ambitions of his own with the aid of the Illyrian armies. These armies would, in the later third century, turn out to be of great importance to several would-be emperors. This was only one of many disturbances in the mid 180s. Unrest in Britain,

Germany, and Gaul even led to a siege of legion VII Augusta in AD 185 (*CIL* 11.6053). This period also saw the so-called *Bellum desertorum*, which was led by a certain Maternus – it even seems to have led to an attack on the emperor's life (Alföldy (1989)). At about the same time, in the years 184/5, there also seem to have been substantial fortification activities at the frontiers of the Empire, in Lower Pannonia and Mauretania Caesariensis – much of which may, however, have been restoration of damage done during the Marcomannic wars (von Saldern (2003) 98–114).

In any case, after the end of the Maternus revolt, there finally was peace in the Empire, which Commodus (or those surrounding him) emphasized widely. Following Hadrianic precedent, the emperor had Tellus depicted on coins and medallions, as well as four different PAX-types in his central coinage, compared to the two that Marcus Aurelius had issued, one of which had been during Marcus' and Commodus' co-regency (Hekster (2002) 84, 100 n. 67). But notwithstanding celebrations, the relationship between emperor and senate remained wrought. Part of the problem was the prominent position of Commodus' new favorite freedman, Marcus Aurelius Cleander. As his name illustrates, he was given freedom by Marcus, and had eventually managed to succeed Saoterus as the imperial *cubicularius*. In 186 he had gained sufficient trust from Commodus to be entrusted to care of the latter's 'bedroom and person' (*AE* (1952) 6), and may even have led a *consilium principis* – an unheard-of affront to senatorial prestige (Oliver (1989) 421–23, no. 209). Unsurprisingly, senatorial sources present a bleak picture of Cleander, whom they blame for excessive greed and present as a wholly corrupt upstart, effectively ruling the Empire. The most outrageous moment – in such a presentation of events – was the year 189/190, in which as many as 25 consuls were appointed in a single year. Dio (73.9.3), Herodian (1.12.3), and the *Historia Augusta* (*Commodus* 6.9–10) depict this as a money-making decision by Cleander, who is said to have sold these consulships to the highest bidders. A more likely scenario is that the Antonine plague had resurfaced again, killing many at Rome, and that by appointing so many consuls, the emperor ensured that there would remain a sufficient number of ex-consuls to take up essential positions in the realm. But the scorn of especially Dio towards Cleander must betray contemporary feelings among senators about Cleander's increasing status and influence.

Ultimately, sometime in AD 189 or 190, Cleander was got rid of. Shortly preceding his death, there had been a number of executions, most prominently of Antistius Burrus (with whom Commodus had shared his first consulate as sole ruler) and Gaius Arrius Antoninus, both probably related to the imperial family. Combining this with the prolonged absence of children from Commodus' marriage with Bruttia Crispina, whom he married in 178, shortly after his first consulate, it may be possible to discern traces of a dynastic struggle (De Ranieri (1997) 171–76). In fact, both Burrus and Antoninus were

allegedly put to death ‘on the suspicion of pretending to the throne’ (*HA Commodus* 6.11, 7.1). In the same years, almost the entire *gens* of the Petronii Surae Mamertini, related to Commodus’ sister Cornificia, were killed off. The end of the period of adoptive emperors, even if it had never been a thought-out system as such, seems to have given rise to all kinds of dynastic troubles beyond Commodus’ reign. In such troubles Marcus’ kin would hardly ever be safe: Marcus Peduceus Plautius Quintillus (the husband to Marcus’ daughter Fadilla) was killed by Septimius Severus in 205, whereas Tiberius Claudius Aurelius Pompeianus (Lucilla’s son) was killed by Caracalla shortly after the latter murdered Geta. Marcus’ heirs were never certain of their life in times of dynastic upheaval (Pflaum (1961); Hekster (2001) 45–46). Be that as it may, the direct cause of Cleander’s fall was more mundane. Grain shortage in Rome led to popular discontent. Commodus wanted to retain (or restore) his popularity with the urban *plebs*, and held Cleander responsible for the troubles. It seems almost certain the food supply was consciously disturbed, either by Cleander himself in an aborted attempt to gain the throne (Herodian 1.12.4), or by senatorial opposition to Cleander, amongst whom the *praefectus annonae* Papirius Dionysius looms large (Dio 73.13.5; von Saldern (2003) 190–215). The second scenario is the more probable one. Cleander’s enemies orchestrated urban unrest, and so forced the emperor’s hand. Commodus could not add the loss of popular support to his troubled relation with many senators. Cleander was dismissed and executed.

3. Commodus’ Last Years and Self-Presentation

A great famine arose in Rome, not because there was any real shortage of crops, but simply because those who ruled the state were plundering the food supply. Commodus afterwards put to death those who plundered all and he confiscated their property. But for the moment, he pretended that a Golden Age had come, with the name ‘Commodianus’. (*HA Commodus* 14.1–3)

The emperor’s behavior following Cleander’s fall is well known, and often derided. Commodus started to (increasingly) identify himself with Hercules, ultimately even presenting himself as Hercules Romanus Augustus. He also linked a great many institutions within the Roman Empire to his person, not only declaring a ‘Commodian’ Golden Age, but also renaming months, army units, and even Rome itself in his own honor. To top this off, he started to personally engage in gladiatorial games, occasionally doing so in Herculean guise, re-enacting Hercules’ mythical labors. It may have been madness, but it was well advertised through public edicts, statuary, coins, and public performances by the emperor (Hekster (2002) 92–129).

It also may well have been a direct reaction to the loss of his last main advisor. The events leading to the fall of Cleander, after the plot that had led to the death of Saoterus at the beginning, and the conspiracy surrounding Perennis at the middle of his reign, seem to have led to a change of imperial politics. Whereas before Commodus appears to have tried to rule through (not always entirely) loyal lieutenants, he now showed himself in full control. The choice to place low-status advisors in a position of power had in itself been an apparent break with Marcus' policies. New men, of course, had already been promoted to positions of power during Marcus' reign, and Commodus continued this course of action. Even after Cleander's death the emperor continued to appoint men whose future would show their qualities to important positions in the realm. Lucius Pescennius Niger, for instance, was now given Syria, whereas Pannonia Superior went to Lucius Septimius Severus. Yet, father and son's *style* of rule differed. Marcus, at least publicly, showed senators the respect they yearned for, and surrounded himself with men who were wholly acceptable to the Roman élites. Commodus' appointments for positions such as the urban prefecture and important roles in the provinces and armies may to a great extent have cohered with the types of choices his father had made, but the people in his immediate vicinity were very different men from Marcus' *amici*. And, as has long been noted: 'The master of the world depends upon his ministers and agents' (Syme (1988) 676). These 'ministers' had already been a break away from Marcus' style of government. Commodus' behavior from 189/90 onwards would be a much more emphatic break from his father's emperorship.

Recent scholarship has suggested that Commodus' behavior in the last three years of his life should be seen as a conscious change in imperial representation, aimed at guaranteeing popular support and, more importantly, endorsement from the armies. Following Marcus' death, Commodus had started to present himself as the pious son, commemorating his imperial father through coins (*RIC* 3, nos. 264–75) and, among other honors, the still extant column of Marcus Aurelius in the (now) Piazza Colonna at Rome (Davies (2000) 42–48). After Lucilla's conspiracy and the removal of Saoterus, the imperial *persona* was enhanced by adding Pius to his titulature, possibly linking the emperor to his adoptive grandfather Antoninus, but more likely presenting himself as some sort of *Auctor Pietatis*. Following Perennis' removal in 185, yet another epithet was added, making Commodus Pius Felix – though this change could also relate to the celebrations surrounding Commodus' *Decennales*. In any case, the new titulature, which would become a standard part of the imperial titles from Caracalla onwards, presented the ruler as a sort of religious champion for the Empire at large; a substantial step away from the much more senatorial way in which Marcus had presented himself (Van't Dack (1991)). Consistent emphasis on Commodus' *nobilitas*, as the only ever emperor to be able to trace himself back to five imperial (adoptive) ancestors, further showed the supremacy of the

emperor. Perhaps the negative reputation of Faustina Minor can be partly seen as a reaction to this claim by her son (Priwitzer (2008) 96–174). Considering these developments in imperial presentation, it may not be surprising that a further step was taken in the very period in which dynastic troubles seem to have been brewing, and Cleander came to the fall. In 189 coins and medallions depicted Jupiter Iuvenis, whose physique resembles Commodus rather than the supreme god, with larger eyes, a smaller beard, and a decidedly less muscular stature (Bergmann (1998) 265). Yet another step away from Marcus' model of emperorship was made.

None of this, however, properly anticipated the emperor's change in imperial representation in the last three years of his reign. The way Commodus ultimately identified himself with Hercules went beyond what even the most extravagant Roman rulers had done before him, or would do afterwards. From 190 onwards, coins celebrated first Hercules Commodianus and then, from December 191 onwards, even Hercules Romanus Augustus, with several coins showing the emperor on the obverse wearing the lion-skin (*RIC* 3, 581, 586, 591; 250–54b, 637–40, 643–44). Now, also, Commodus had himself depicted as Hercules in the (in)famous bust which is prominently displayed in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome: the Capitoline bust which shows the emperor wearing the lion-skin, and holding the club and the apples of the Hesperides. The pedestal, a globe with zodiacal signs and adjacent cornucopias and kneeling amazons, further emphasizes the emperor's supreme position (von den Hoff (2005)).

This Herculean self-presentation was linked to the renaming of senate, months, cities, and legions after himself. In 192, even the capital was renamed the Colonia Antoniniana Commodiana – probably partly in connection to great restoration works following a devastating fire in that same year (Dio 73.15.2; *HA Commodus* 8.6–9, 15.7; *RIC* 3, 247, 629). The message must have been clear: only Commodus could continue to guarantee Rome's greatness, and would protect his realm in Herculean fashion. In similar hyperbole, Commodus re-enacted the divinity's mythological labors by replicating them in the arena. Dio's descriptions of these events border on the ridiculous, but as a member of the élite who were increasingly sidelined by the emperor's behavior, he was hardly an unbiased bystander. Best known is the incident at which the emperor allegedly assembled all those inhabitants of the *urbs* who had lost their feet, gave them serpent-like appendices, and then slaughtered them with either club or bow and arrows, pretending they were the mythical giants. Only marginally less striking is a previous story that Commodus advertised that he was going to 'put on' Hercules and the Stymphalian birds, only for the masses to avoid the arena so as not to get shot (Dio 73.20.2–3; *HA Commodus* 9.6). Dio may have smiled at this (though it will have been ill-advised to do so openly), but it did show an emperor who, at least symbolically, gave himself heroic status, far above that of any senator, or indeed the senate as a whole.

Nor do the masses seem to have shunned these performances. Rather the opposite, if Herodian is to be believed. He explicitly mentions Commodus' popularity 'with the mob' in the context of the imperial performances, and writes about spectators coming to Rome 'from all over Italy and the neighbouring provinces', making sure that the amphitheatre was packed with people (Herodian 1.15–7, 1.15.1–2). It is for this apparent popularity of the emperor's behavior with the masses, and some indications of a favorable reception of his new image with the praetorians, various other legionaries, and inhabitants of the provinces, that modern authors have argued for a considered change in imperial self-fashioning, aimed at the *plebs* and the legions (Hekster (2002) 92–177; von Saldern (2003) 180–89; Meyer-Zwiffelhofer (2006)).

4. The Year of Four Emperors

Commodus' behavior may have served a purpose, but it clearly antagonized many. Matters came to a close on December 31, 192. It is impossible to fully separate truth from half-truth from lie in this final conspiracy of Commodus' reign. Yet one common element in all historical accounts of this event is the emperor's wish to open the new year dressed as a gladiator emphasizing his superior position or utter madness, depending on the point of view. Possibly, he planned on killing the consuls-elect in the process, or, alternatively, he wanted to get rid of his close entourage for opposing this idea, and they, in turn, decided to get rid of him first. There are, at the same time, indications that the urban prefect and first successor to Commodus, Publius Helvius Pertinax, may have pre-planned the affair. That might explain the convenient timing (on the first of January, soldiers would not carry weapons, disabling the loyal praetorians) and the rapid reactions of several key players after the emperor's assassination (Birley (1969)).

Whatever his involvement in the plot to kill Commodus, Pertinax' own reign did not last long. He may have won over senators (notwithstanding his relatively low birth as son of a freedman) by emphasizing his position as 'princeps senatus', but he spent little on donatives, and emphasized stringent military discipline. He was murdered by members of his own bodyguard less than three months after coming to power, the first Roman ruler to have been 'overthrown by purely military discontent because he could not satisfy the expectations of his troops' (Campbell (2005) 2). Many third-century emperors would follow his unwitting example. Two senators, Tiberius Flavius Sulpicianus and Marcus Didius Julianus, then made a bid for the throne, leading to an infamous bidding-war in which the one tried to outmatch the other in the rewards they offered the praetorians for supporting their respective bids.

Julianus won, and interestingly included a promise to restore Commodus' reputation (senators had lost no time in damning the latter's memory after his death) in his bid, indicating the former emperor's posthumous popularity amongst these troops (Herodian 2.6.4–13; Dio 73.11–12; *HA Did. Jul.* 2.6–7). Julianus did not last long either. Where Pertinax had lacked military support, Julianus' way of coming to power was abhorred by senate and populace alike. Towards the end of April 193 Pescennius Niger was proclaimed emperor in Antioch. Slightly earlier, on April 9 of the same year, Septimius Severus was proclaimed in Carnuntum by his troops. There might even have been yet another contender to the throne, but through a shrewd move Severus bound the governor of Britain, Didius Clodius Albinus, to himself by appointing him Caesar before he further developed ambitions of his own – though he would later bid for the throne all the same (Birley (1988) 97–98).

Ultimately, Severus won through and would reign until 211, but he had to march on Rome to establish his power – only the second time in imperial history for this to happen. Dio, who describes Julianus almost as negatively as he had Commodus, ridicules the former's attempts at preparing Rome for siege: 'We laughed particularly when Julianus strengthened the palace with latticed gates and strong doors' (Dio, 74.16.1). But none of Dio's banter takes away from the severity for many in the capital of Rome becoming an actual battlefield for the first time in well over a century. Severus may have later tried to overcome this memory by emphasizing military victories outside of Rome, and by embellishing the capital with monuments, many of which are visible in the well-known Severan Marble Plan – a map of Rome claiming to indicate 'every temple and warehouse, street and alleyway, shop, courtyard, bathing complex, and residence in the city' (Trimble (2007) 368). Like many emperors had done before him, Severus used different means at his disposal to guarantee and display a new dynasty. In fact, he would prove to be the last emperor up to Constantine to create dynastic continuity for a substantial period of time. It was, however, difficult for him to re-establish central authority, following Commodus' attempts to elevate the emperorship, and the military auction which had brought Julianus to power (Morgan (1999) 31). One way in which he tried to strengthen his reputation was by adopting himself, retroactively, as Marcus' son, and Commodus' brother.

5. Marcus Aurelius' Son and *Divi Commodi Frater*

In 195, at about the time when Clodius Albinus was proclaimed Augustus, Severus 'found' himself a new father by being posthumously adopted into the Antonine family. From that moment onwards he presented himself as the son of Marcus Aurelius and brother of Commodus, whom he even deified,

restoring Commodus' memory in the process. Caracalla was renamed Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and it is probable that this new Severan dynastic claim spurred Albinus into action. What good was it to be Caesar of a ruler who was openly establishing a dynasty (Baharal (1996) 21)? At the same time, however, it may well have been for fear of Albinus' superior ancestry that Severus constructed his own lineage in the first place; Herodian claims that senators preferred Albinus 'because he traced his *nobilitas* to a long line of ancestors' (Herodian 2.5.2). Being able to trace his own invented ancestry back to so many esteemed rulers must have sounded like a good idea. Central coinage broadcast the message (*RIC* 4.1, 686, 700–702a, 712) and exactly a century after Nerva's *dies imperii* the new 'Antonine' ruler set up an honorary inscription referring back to his self-defined *atarus* or great-great-grandfather (*CIL* 6.954). Provincial élites took the emphatic hint, and set up similar inscriptions in turn, even before a perhaps somewhat hesitant senate accepted the new genealogical situation (*CIL* 8.9317, 10.7271; Cooley (2007) 385–87). Dio lamented that Severus 'caused us especial dismay by constantly styling himself the son of Marcus and the brother of Commodus' (Dio 76.7.4), but senators had little say in the matter.

It is striking that Severus explicitly emphasized his new position as brother of *divus Commodus*, instigating the first ever *renovatio memoriae* and going so far as to rename Jerusalem the *Colonia Aelia Capitolina Commodiana Pia Felix* during a visit of the Severan family in 201 (Kadman (1959)). This may indicate that continuing popularity of Commodus in some quarters influenced Severus' actions, though the status advantage of being able to refer to many popular emperors as ancestors and the legal-financial advantage of being the unchallenged heir to private Antonine wealth probably outweighed anything else (Hekster (2002) 189–91). In general terms, Severus' style of government was somewhat removed from that of Marcus: strong attention to the *domus divina*, subjects referring to the living emperor as a god, and army units being called *Severiana* rather brought to mind Commodus' emperorship (*CIL* 8.25808, 8.21614, 8.5329, 13.5682; Speidel (1983)).

Like Marcus Aurelius, Severus was succeeded from within the family, fictitiously continuing the *gens Aurelii*. As is well known, Caracalla got rid of his brother and co-ruler Geta in December 211. Shortly afterwards (and perhaps in connection to it) he issued the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, granting Roman citizenship to almost all free inhabitants of the Empire. Causes and consequences of the constitution are much discussed. One minor but highly visible result was that the new citizens took on the official *nomen gentile* of the emperor who granted them this enormous right. Overnight Aurelius became the most common name in the east of the Empire, and a close second in the west (after the much longer established Julius) (Potter (2004) 139; Hekster (2008) 47–50). Just over 30 years after Marcus Aurelius' death, many in the

Empire ended up carrying his name. It will not have been what he had in mind when advising his men at his deathbed on how to keep his ‘memory alive for ever’ (Herodian 1.4 6). Indeed, his memory was preserved in many different ways throughout the ages.

6. The Empire after Marcus Aurelius’ Death

This chapter has mainly focused on the way emperorship and the governance of Empire shifted after Marcus’ death. Needless to say, there was more to the Roman Empire than that. Military events have already been touched upon. Successful settlements with the Danube tribes were followed by turbulence in various parts of the Empire. It is likely that the draining of legionary power through the extensive fighting during Marcus’ reign, exacerbated by the Antonine plague and substantial numbers of deserters, was to blame (von Saldern (2003) 140–41). But the unrest was quelled, and the remainder of Commodus’ reign was peaceful. The throne wars of 193 to 197 clearly created disturbances in much of the realm, which must have taken some time to quiet down. This might explain the long-lasting success of brigands, the most famous of whom was probably Bulla Felix, who seems to have led hundreds of men, and to have kept a trace on movements near Rome and the harbor of Brindisi (Dio 77.10). For over two years he eluded authorities, to the apparent dismay of the emperor, who in 209 was fighting the Caledonians in Britain after their rebellion of 207. Even after Bulla was finally captured, brigandage remained rampant during Severus’ reign (Grünwald (2004)). Still, under Severus Rome was anything but on the defensive; extensive campaigns against the Parthians in 195 and 197/8 were in some way a continuation of Lucius Verus’ triumph over the Parthians in 166 and a marked change from the Marcomannic frontier wars. The same dichotomy was visible in Caracalla’s reign, in which defensive actions against Cenni and Alamanni in 213 were followed by an invasion into Parthia in 216. The success of the Sassanids in 226 changed this pattern: troubles on the northern front could no longer be compensated by eastern victories, but were confounded by heavy (and often unsuccessful) fighting in the east. The dramatic victories of Shapur against various Roman rulers, and his famous capture of Valerian in 260, were still in the future, however, and it would have been near-impossible for contemporaries to see how much the Empire’s fortunes were about to change (Frye (2005) 460–70).

What *was* increasingly becoming clear was the dominance of the military. Julianus’ accession had shown how legions could be bought and Pertinax’ death how soldiers were willing to act if not treated as they thought proper. Towards the end of Marcus’ reign already, it became difficult to levy sufficient numbers of troops. The unrest in the early 180s and then more emphatically in the early 190s

only worsened the situation. The combination of these different factors may have caused Severus to grant soldiers the right to marry and to wear the equestrian goldring. More importantly for the economics of the Empire, he markedly raised their pay, leading to a near-instant shortage of precious metals. If there had ever been doubt about the importance of the military for retaining power, it was gone (Handy (2009) 100–30). Soldiers from now on were openly loyal to the man who paid them most. Of course, the so-called third-century crisis in which these aspects were to play so profound a role was hardly a speck on the horizon at the time of Marcus' death, but there does seem to be consensus that the Marcomannic wars and their consequences formed 'a turning-point for the empire' (Birley (2000) 165), placing the empire on the defensive for the first time. This clearly changed the position the military were to play afterwards.

Events during Marcus' reign and its aftermath, more specifically the Antonine plague with its heavy death toll, are of the utmost interest when looking at economic changes. There are various indications of decline from the mid 160s onwards, the most clear one being a drop in precious metal contents in coins, but others ranging from a drop in shipwrecks and building activities, via a much referred to drop of metal content in the Greenland icecap, to recent analyses of animal and human bones, which in turn indicate that the inhabitants of the Empire became less well nourished (Jongman (2007) 187–95). The evidence seems convincing, and would indicate that at the time of the death of Marcus, the Empire was already on a downward curve, though of course several areas would start to suffer the economic consequences much later, and some fortunate areas hardly at all (Witschel (2004)).

Several important developments within the Roman Empire, then, were foreshadowed or originated during Marcus' reign. One ought to be careful, though, to turn any one period of Roman history into a watershed. Events went unnoticed, and were hardly ever inevitable. External factors had always influenced the Empire, and would continue to do so. Many of these internal and external developments would cause suffering for many in the Empire. It remains interesting how the calamities in Marcus' reign that would end up being so detrimental for future developments of the Roman world reflected so little on the emperor's reputation. The status of the emperor at the time of his death was better than that of his empire, and would continue to be so for a long time to come.

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PART IV

**MATERIAL FORMS OF
SELF-REPRESENTATION**

CHAPTER 15

The Column of Marcus Aurelius

Martin Beckmann

1. Date and Purpose

The Column of Marcus Aurelius (Figure 15.1) was apparently complete by (and perhaps completed in) AD 193, when Adrastus, the procurator of the Column, applied to Septimius Severus for permission to use ‘all the bricks and building materials’ from the various sheds and outbuildings that had surrounded the monument during its construction in order to build a new house for himself behind it (*CIL* VI.1585 = *ILS* 5920; Daguet-Gagey (1998)). The date of decree of the Column is more problematic. No inscription survives on the monument itself. Dio (72.34.1) records that after Marcus’ death ‘he received many marks of honor; among other things a gold statue of him was set up in the senate-house itself’. His silence regarding the Column suggests that it was not a posthumous monument. The fact that Commodus, who was present at the front in the campaigns in the late 170s but not in those up to 175, does not appear in the frieze suggests that the Column was decreed in the year 176, the year of Marcus’ return to Rome after two victorious wars in the north (and a tour of the east).

Ancient sources refer to the Column of Marcus Aurelius as a *columna cochlis* or (in one case only, *CIL* VI.1585) a *columna centenaria*. The latter term refers to the Column’s height of 100 feet; its isolated use in a legal document (Adrastus’ inscription) suggests that this was a technical term that did not gain widespread usage. The term *cochlis*, an adjective derived from the Greek word for a snail-shell, is more common and refers exclusively to the fact that the Column contained an internal helical staircase (Figure 15.2; Beckmann (2002)). No ancient source makes any mention of the Column’s frieze. This indicates that for the Romans, the Column of Marcus Aurelius had



Figure 15.1 The Column of Marcus Aurelius in Piazza Colonna. Photo by author.

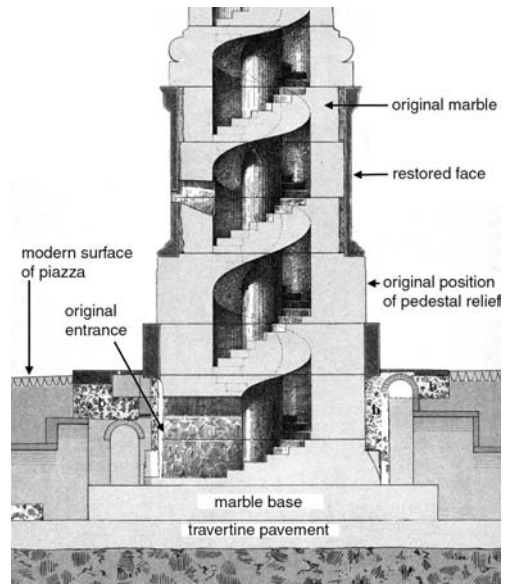


Figure 15.2 Section drawing (west– east as seen from the north) of the pedestal of the Column. E. Petersen, A. von Domaszewski, and G. Calderini (1896), *Die Marcus-Säule auf Piazza Colonna in Rom*. Munich. pl. 3.



Figure 15.3 The pedestal of the Column in the 16th century. A. Lafreri, *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, circa 1550 (no date), p. 34 (no pagination).



Figure 15.4 The lower portion of the Column, seen from the east. Photo by author.

two main functions: one, as an honorary monument of unprecedented size; two, as an architectural wonder, a class of monument that was normally solid but now had been turned into a building that one could enter and ascend. The balcony at the top of the Column's capital would have provided the visitor with an unprecedented view of the Via Flaminia, the Antonine funerary monuments, and other structures on the Campus Martius.

2. Location

The choice of location was directly relevant to the location of Marcus' wars: beside the Via Flaminia, the road leading north to the scene of the campaigns and in the same general area where he is shown leaving and later returning to Rome on the *Profectio* and *Adventus* Panel Reliefs (Ryberg (1967)). The Column's architecture and decoration make clear that the relationship between the Column and the Via Flaminia was of primary importance to its designers. Thus the eastern side of the Column was considered to be the primary axis of approach and interaction with the monument. Rather than following the orientation of other monuments of the northern Campus Martius (e.g. the Column of Antoninus Pius, the Antonine funerary altars and the *Ara Pacis*) the pedestal of the Column of Marcus Aurelius is aligned with its east face parallel to the Via Flaminia. The doorway giving access to the Column's internal staircase faces the Via Flaminia as do the most important scenes of the Column's helical frieze: Marcus' crossing of the Danube, the Rain Miracle, and the central scene of Victoria inscribing her shield. All these scenes would have been immediately visible to a person entering the area of the Column, and some – particularly the Victoria (see Figure 15.7) with its extremely large central figure – may have been visible from the Via Flaminia itself.

The Column is set back from the Via Flaminia, which suggests that it was the centerpiece of a large, open area, perhaps with more or less the same dimensions as the modern Piazza Colonna. The Column sat on a marble platform about 30 feet square and 3 feet tall, which rested in turn on a layer of travertine blocks (see Figure 15.2). The top of this platform was about three meters higher than the surface of the Via Flaminia and from the road a passer-by would not have been able to see the bottom of the Column pedestal. Steps must have existed to provide access from the road. The area around the Column was apparently open to casual visiting and varied use: on the top of the marble platform in front of the door giving access to the Column excavators found an incised *tabula lusoria*, an ancient Roman gaming board in the shape of a circle divided with pie-like slices, incised into the marble (Martines (2000) 20). Although both of the late-third-/early-fourth-century Regionary Catalogues

list in the same breath a *templum Antonini* (*divi Antonini* in the *Notitia et columnam coclidem*, ‘a temple of (the divine) Antoninus and a cochlid column’, no evidence of the temple of Marcus Aurelius has been found. Further to the west stood the Column of Antoninus Pius and three large stone funerary altars. One of these is aligned with Pius’ Column and almost certainly belongs to him; the other two, side by side beneath the Palazzo del Parlamento, probably belong to Marcus Aurelius and his wife Faustina the Younger. A clever refinement in the Column’s design compelled a visitor to direct his attention towards these altars, since the upper doorway of the staircase faced directly onto the altars (Davies (2000) 167–69), an innovation that increases the importance of the stairway in the overall function of the Column.

3. Construction and Carving

The Column consists of 30 (in ancient times 31) blocks of white marble from the ancient quarry of Luna, modern Carrara, on the western coast of northern Italy. Ten blocks, arranged in seven levels, form the pedestal; 19 form the Column itself (including its base and capital) and one further block stands atop the capital (there was once one more to cap it off and provide a support for the statue atop but this was already missing by the time the first drawings of the Column were made in the 16th century). The Column drums measure approximately $5\frac{1}{4}$ Roman feet tall and each contains eight steps (counting both risers and treads). The diameter of Marcus’ Column differs by only half a foot between the bottom and the top ($12\frac{3}{4}$ to $12\frac{1}{4}$ feet); this constitutes a simple taper rather than true entasis as seen on Trajan’s Column (Martines (2000)).

The process of construction involved lifting stones that were substantially heavier than those involved in the construction of Trajan’s Column, whose capital weighs only 44.7 tons in comparison to 79.1 for that of Marcus’ (Martines (2000) 75, 77). This was probably achieved using a method similar to that proposed by Lancaster (1999) for Trajan’s Column: two massive wooden towers, square in section and joining each other side by side, would have been built. The blocks would have been raised in one tower using energy supplied by multiple capstans turned by humans or animals at ground level. Once the blocks had reached the necessary height, they would have been shifted horizontally to the second tower before being lowered carefully into position. Metal dowels set in lead secured the blocks and drums together; numerous pits at the joints between drums mark where these have been removed by Medieval scavengers (e.g. Figure 15.7, in Victoria’s shield).

The carving of the Column's frieze would have occupied a large number of sculptors; evidence of different carving styles in the relief border suggests that 40 or more individuals were employed on the project (Beckmann (2005)). In contrast to Trajan's Column, where the height of the frieze ranges between 145 and 77 cm over its course, the frieze of Marcus' Column proceeds at a consistent height throughout its course of 20 windings each slightly less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ Roman feet in height. This simple yet precise layout suggests that an architect was involved in planning the frieze. The majority by far of the Column's scenes are portioned into discrete rectangular units taking up one-eighth of a full winding. This division into eighths becomes more and more regular as the frieze proceeds up the Column, until in the upper windings it is almost unbroken. The increasing regularity in scene size and placement suggests that the planning process began with the lowest scenes and moved upwards, the same direction in which the frieze was carved (Beckmann (2006)).

4. The Pedestal

Although the majority of the pedestal's substance is antique, its exterior was entirely refaced by Domenico Fontana under orders of Pope Sixtus V between the years 1588 and 1589 (Martines in Coarelli (2008) 73–78). Even before this the base was already in a serious state of decay, with only a portion of its original surface surviving; this much at least we know from a small number of drawings made before 1588. The most useful of these is that made by Antonio Lafreri (Figure 15.3), who published an etching whose original artist is disputed; it shows a view of the Column from the east, dates to about 1550, and preserves the only surviving image of this face of the pedestal. The drawing shows that five of the pedestal's seven courses were visible above ground in the 16th century (the lowest two, containing the original entrance, had already been buried by the rising ground level of the Campus Martius). The middle (fourth) course of stone (actually a single block – see Figure 15.2) projected beyond the others, was fairly well preserved, and was covered with sculpted figures. Above and below this projecting block the surface of the pedestal was very rough and presumably was originally covered with a cladding of another type of stone, perhaps colored marble; the holes for clamps by which this cladding was fastened can be seen on Lafreri's etching (for a possible reconstruction of the pedestal, see Jordan-Ruwe (1990)). Judging from his rendering of the sculpture on the lowest part of the Column shaft, Lafreri's etching of the pedestal relief is likely fairly trustworthy with regard to detail (cf. Figures 15.3 and 15.4). The theme of the relief is a submission: two barbarians (identifiable by their long-

sleeved tunics and trousers) kneel and offer themselves to the emperor, who stands just left of centre. A figure in military dress, perhaps Virtus personified (certainly not Commodus, as suggested by Petersen et al. (1896) 8 and Becatti (1960) 48–49, since his image would not have survived the condemnation of his memory in January 193 (Dio 74.2.1)), presents the captives to Marcus Aurelius. This scene, much closer to the ancient viewer than the helical frieze far above, would have constituted a significant portion of the Column's visual message.

5. The Helical Frieze

The restoration work of Domenico Fontana included the plugging of two major and a number of minor holes in the fabric of the Column shaft. This was carried out using marble obtained from the remains of the Septizodium and the plugs were carved with figures to mask the repair. In most cases these restorations have absolutely no relation to what was originally in their place (an exception is the river god in scene III) and care must be taken to differentiate between them and the original sections of frieze. They can be distinguished by their style (neo-classical), by the straight edges of the plugs, and from the records kept by Fontana's chief sculptor (reproduced in Caprino et al. (1955) 121–24) that include detailed accounts of the nature and number of figures which were executed as new work.

Despite the extensive restoration in 1588/9, over 90 percent of the carved surface of the helical frieze is original (though the west side is heavily damaged by fire and subsequent erosion). The frieze is over 200 feet in length and is carved much deeper than on Trajan's Column (10 cm versus 4 cm). Petersen et al. (1896) divided the frieze into 116 units or scenes; in most (but not all) cases these divisions likely represent original Roman concepts of scene units. The content of the frieze was derived from a variety of sources. The very first scenes (I and II, a river landscape generally accepted as representing the bank of the Danube), were copied from Trajan's Column. This copying is exact, down to the smallest details of buildings and objects; the only difference from Trajan's Column are two additions: a palisade in the background and a house at the beginning of scene I. The palisade may be intended to communicate the actual appearance of the frontier in the 170s or it may simply have been added, like the extra house, to fill up the empty space so conspicuous in the Trajanic model. The following scenes of a river god and the Roman army marching across a bridge of boats (III), an *adlocutio* (IV), a marching scene (V), and a stone-walled fortification (VI) are directly derived but not exactly copied from Trajan's Column. After this point copying from the frieze of Trajan's Column for the most part ceases, though it appears again in a scene showing the

Romans attacking a fortress in *testudo* (tortoise) formation and in the image of Victoria.

The remainder of the frieze is filled with scenes relating to Marcus' wars. On the Column of Trajan the order of scenes is clear and is repeated in a careful structure – campaigns begin with marching, followed by construction, then sacrifice and an address to the troops, finally battle and the subsequent submission of prisoners (Lehmann-Hartleben (1926)). But the same sequence of scenes found on Trajan's Column cannot be identified on the Column of Marcus Aurelius, at least not with the degree of regularity in which they are employed on the earlier monument. It is possible that this was the result of a deliberate decision not to follow the same ideologically based framework employed on Trajan's Column (Hölscher (2000) 95, 105); it could also be the case that the designers of Marcus' Column were unable to appreciate (and perhaps were simply unaware) that such a system existed at all on Trajan's Column.

The historical interpretation of the Column's frieze is extremely problematic. Some of the scenes on the Column appear to have been derived from historical events in Marcus' wars, although the only certain example is the Rain Miracle. (The Danube crossing and the Victoria, the design and position of both of which are clearly copied from Trajan's Column, are not historically specific.) The Rain Miracle (scene XVI; Figures 15.4 and 15.5) is recorded by Dio (72.8.1–3, 72.10.1–5) and later authors and has attracted almost as much modern scholarly attention as the remainder of the frieze put together (most recently Wolf (1990); Löhr (2009) 131, and above all Kovács (2009)). In Dio's description a Roman army, surrounded by the enemy, is saved from thirst by a rain that falls upon them while at the same time their barbarian opponents are destroyed by thunderbolts and a hailstorm; all this follows prayers made by the emperor himself. Unfortunately none of these details can be found on the Column: there is no actual fighting taking place, nor is there any sign of hail or thunderbolts; no barbarians are shown turning themselves over to the Roman army but instead are washed away in a torrent of water (and not consumed by fire). And the emperor is not present. Also problematic is the date of the Rain Miracle relative to its position on the Column. Dio (72.10.4) records Marcus' salutation as *imperator* for the seventh time in connection with the event and IMP VII appears on coins of 174. The problem is that this scene appears in the third winding of the frieze (see Figure 15.4); thus, if the frieze chronicles events from circa 172 to 175, then the Rain Miracle would either be out of place chronologically or else one must imagine the first three windings of the frieze covering almost three years of war and the last 17 windings covering less than two. The best solution is likely to understand the Danube crossing scene, copied from Trajan's Column, as symbolic rather than historically specific; this annuls the significance of the distance between it and the Rain Miracle from a



Figure 15.5 Scene XVI, the Rain Miracle, final portion of the scene showing the Rain God. E. Petersen, A. von Domaszewski, and G. Calderini (1896), *Die Marcus-Säule auf Piazza Colonna in Rom*. Munich. pl. 23A.



Figure 15.6 Scene XI, the Lightning Miracle. E. Petersen, A. von Domaszewski, and G. Calderini (1896), *Die Marcus-Säule auf Piazza Colonna in Rom*. Munich. pl. 18A.



Figure 15.7 The middle portion of the Column, seen from the east. Photo by author.



Figure 15.8 Scene LXVI, showing Roman soldiers presenting severed barbarian heads to Marcus Aurelius. E. Petersen, A. von Domaszewski, and G. Calderini (1896), *Die Marcus-Säule auf Piazza Colonna in Rom*. Munich. pl. 75B.

chronological perspective. Regardless of when the event actually happened, the designers of the Column would have had good reason to place this well-known scene low on the Column and thus make it clearly visible to the public.

The only other scene on the Column to be specifically mentioned in an ancient source is the Lightning Miracle. This event is mentioned in the *Historia Augusta* (*Marcus* 24.4), where it is recorded that Marcus Aurelius ‘summoned lightning from heaven against a siege-engine of the enemy by means of his prayers’. The corresponding scene on the Column (Figure 15.6 and partially visible at the far right end of the second winding in Figure 15.4) shows a stone fortress filled with Roman soldiers on the left and a siege tower on the right; the tower has been struck by a bolt of lightning and is already in flames (note that Petersen’s division between scenes X and XI is clearly incorrect). But the mention of this scene in *HA Marcus* 24.4 may not necessarily constitute evidence of its historicity. In the same sentence the *HA* continues: ‘and likewise rain was obtained when they (Marcus’ soldiers) were suffering with thirst’. This short description matches so well with what is actually depicted in the frieze that it is conceivable that the author of the *HA* may have taken his information from the Column itself. A viewer standing by the north-east corner of the Column’s pedestal would have seen both scenes clearly and close together, the Lightning Miracle just below and a little to the right of the Rain Miracle.

The remaining scenes on the Column can be roughly divided into two general classes: those that because of their unique nature may represent historical events (but for which we have no surviving record), and those that are generic in nature and likely have no specific historical connection. An example of a possibly historical scene is X (Figure 15.4, in the second winding, immediately above the large archway). It represents an encounter at a fork in a stream; to the left of the stream stand four barbarians holding slings; to the right the emperor is surrounded by soldiers, some of whom hold up shields above the emperor’s head to protect him. Scene X does not fit any of the standard genre-scenes on the Column and though this alone does not mean that it is historical (it may simply be a liberal invention) its location just before another more-or-less historical scene (the Lightning Miracle) combined with its iconographic uniqueness suggests that it might represent a genuine event. Such historical images may have been modeled after triumphal paintings or based on sketches made during the actual campaigns. Verus offered Fronto ‘*picturas*’ of events in the Parthian wars, in addition to copies of dispatches and letters, for use as source material for Fronto’s history (Fronto, *ad Verum Imp.* 2.3 (in the Loeb edition = vol. II, 195)); similar images may have existed for Marcus’ Germanic campaigns.

It is likely that while some images of specific events in Marcus’ wars were available to the Column’s designers, these were not sufficient to fill the entire frieze. To accomplish this, a large number of generic war-related scenes characterized by repeated compositional schemes and figure types were created

specifically for the Column. These genre scenes include almost all battle, march, and *adlocutio* scenes. Lehmann-Hartleben ((1926) 88) suggested that the relatively small size of the battle scenes compared to those on Trajan's Column may reflect the reality of a war conducted in small skirmishes or by small units. It seems more likely however that the size of the battles was determined by the same factor that determined the size of most genre scenes on the Column: the division of the frieze into small, regular units equal to one-eighth of a full winding.

When compared with earlier state monuments the frieze of the Column of Marcus Aurelius exhibits a number of novelties in figural style and composition. The carvers put great emphasis on the play of shadows and made extensive use of deep drill-cuts and figural modeling. The figures themselves stand out boldly from the background and all levels of depth are used at once – figures in the background may exist as little more than outlines on the marble, while those in the foreground are almost entirely three-dimensional (Wegner (1931) 146–53). Compositionally, background elements (buildings, trees, etc.) are usually reduced to a minimum. Frontality, the technique of carving figures (especially the emperor) in a frontal position facing the viewer, makes its first major appearance on a work of state art (Elsner (2000)). Together these trends define a general change in the style of sculpture in the late second century AD, commonly referred to by the German word *Stilwandel* (Rodenwaldt (1935)). It is likely that this new style appeared on the Column through the employment of carvers trained in the Roman sarcophagus industry, as is suggested by striking parallels between sarcophagi and the carving of certain figures on the Column (Rodenwaldt (1935) 23; Becatti (1960) 77–79).

The iconographic content of the helical frieze of the Column of Marcus Aurelius is also different from that seen on earlier state monuments, especially Trajan's Column. Particularly striking is the high degree of violence shown on Marcus' Column (Pirson (1996); Zanker (2000)). Most shocking are incidents of violence towards unarmed opponents and non-combatants: the repeated depictions of devastation in barbarian villages (scenes XVIII, XX, XLIII; e.g. Figure 15.4 in the fourth winding), the scenes of execution and slaughter of unarmed barbarians (LXI and LXVIII; see Figure 15.7), and the remarkable instance of the killing of a woman by a Roman soldier in scene XCVII. It has been suggested that this violence may reflect the historical reality of wars that were simply more brutal than those of Trajan (Hölscher (2000) 97–98; Dillon (2006) suggests Trajan's artists may have suppressed the actual level of violence), or may have been intended to send a message of superiority to re-assure the Romans in times of danger (Pirson (1996) 174). It seems most likely that the violence shown on the Column is connected to the type of war Marcus' armies were engaged in: a war of retribution against a treacherous enemy. The trust of the Romans had been violated by the Germanic invasion of Italy. The historical Roman reaction to such enemies had always been

extremely violent. In the case of Marcus' Germanic wars it seems to have been no different: when the fighting began to go the Romans' way,

envoys were sent to Marcus by the Iazyges to request peace, but they did not obtain anything. For Marcus, both because he knew their race to be untrustworthy and also because he had been deceived by the Quadi, wished to annihilate them utterly. (Dio 72.13.1–2)

When the Iazyges finally obtained a surrender, the emperor still 'wished to exterminate them utterly', because 'they were still strong and had done the Romans great harm' (Dio 72.13.2). Even individual barbarians were singled out for Marcus' wrath.

Against Arrogaesus [leader of the Quadi] Marcus was so bitter that he issued a proclamation to the effect that anyone who brought him in alive should receive a thousand gold pieces, and anyone who slew him and exhibited his head, five hundred. (Dio 72.14.1)

The direct involvement of Marcus in acts of punishment and brutality is clearly shown on the Column. In scene XX (Figure 15.4, centre of fourth winding) the emperor presides over an execution of a barbarian who crouches on the ground; in scene LXVI (Figure 15.8) two Roman soldiers present Marcus Aurelius with severed barbarian heads. While these scenes of destruction and brutality contrast sharply with the style of war depicted on Trajan's Column, they do have much in common with the content of the triumphal paintings carried in the triumph of Vespasian and Titus in AD 71 (Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 7.139–46) that also chronicled a war of punishment.

FURTHER READING

The Column of Marcus Aurelius still lacks a unified, authoritative treatment. The closest are Petersen et al. (1896) and Caprino et al. (1955); Coarelli (2008) provides a useful introduction in English but does not clearly define or reference many of the major issues and debates; for some of these the English reader is directed to Kovács (2009) and Beckmann (2011). The Column is above all a work of visual art, and thus its photographic documentation is the basis for most research. By far the best photographic images of the Column of Marcus Aurelius are those made by Petersen's photographer, D. Anderson, in the late 19th century (Petersen et al. (1896)). In fact no better images can ever be produced, because this series of photographs records the Column before it faced the ravages of 20th-century pollution. The quality of the large-format prints is so high that tool-marks can clearly be made out. The original publication is unfortunately rare and although the Petersen photographs have been

reproduced twice in recent years (Scheid and Huet (2000) and Coarelli (2008)) the quality of these reproductions is dramatically lower than that of the originals. The Column was photographed for a second time prior to being encased in a protective covering of sandbags in the Second World War; these photographs were published in 1955 (Caprino et al. (1955)). The Caprino photographs are fewer and are taken from a greater distance, thus they cover more area but are much less detailed than Petersen's. A third set of photographs was taken when the monument was last restored in the 1980s. These cover a larger area than Petersen's, but again the level of detail is significantly lower (though better than Caprino's); they remain unpublished and reside in the photographic collection of the German Archaeological Institute at Rome.

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CHAPTER 16

The Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius

Peter Stewart

There exist very few Greek or Roman statues that have remained continuously above ground since antiquity.¹ Of those that have, the most famous is the gilded bronze equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius that stood in the center of the Piazza del Campidoglio, on the Capitoline Hill in Rome, from 1538 to 1981, and before that next to the Lateran Basilica. It is already well attested in Medieval sources and it had acquired an almost literally legendary status before the Renaissance. But in more recent centuries it has accumulated further layers of significance, especially because of its profound influence on artists. It is – and was made to be – an extraordinary work of art, yet its modern fame rather obscures the ways in which it was typical of Roman imperial imagery. Its survival has also contributed, rather like the survival of the *Meditations*, to the mythology of Marcus Aurelius's public persona. So before turning to its remarkable afterlife, let us examine the ancient statue itself in its Roman context.

1. A Roman Statue

Marcus Aurelius, his face placid and unemotional is represented sitting on a powerful horse (Figure 16.1). The animal and its rider are over life-size: 4.24 m from horse's hoof to the top of the emperor's head.² Both have been extensively restored and patched through the ages, but to a much lesser extent than many ancient marble sculptures in old collections, so that the sculpture's general appearance and the emperor's gesture are authentic. The hollow-cast bronze is completely gilded – a feature obscured by dirt and verdigris before its restoration in 1987/1988. Gilded bronze was not



Figure 16.1 The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. Rome, Museo Capitolino. Photo: Troels Myrup Kristensen.

uncommon in Roman portrait statuary, especially equestrian statues, but it was reserved for the most important figures in imperial society, and was common for portraits of the imperial family (Fejfer (2008) 167–68; generally, Lahusen (2001)). Gilding offers the luster of gold without the connotations of tyrannical self-promotion that real gold statues carried (Pliny the Younger alleges that the downfall of the tyrannical emperor Domitian was associated with the prominence of his golden statues: *Panegyricus* 52.3–4). Nevertheless gilding was also used for images of the gods, and perhaps in this statue it lends the emperor a sort of divine radiance.

Marcus sits on a saddle-cloth with several layers, balanced without stirrups, and he inclines his head slightly to the right and downwards, following the

direction of his gaze. His right hand is held downwards with the fingers slightly fanned in a gesture that suggests command, but he would have stared over the head of any nearby viewer on the ground. His half-closed left hand once held the horse's reins – probably nothing else, though various attributes have been suggested. He is dressed in soft leather 'patrician' boots and a tunic cloaked by a *paludamentum* fastened at his right shoulder. It is the sort of practical attire that a gentleman or general might have used while travelling or on campaign. A similarly dressed fragment of an equestrian statue of the emperor Augustus was discovered in the sea near Euboea in 1979 and is now in Athens (Boschung (1993) 110–11, no. 7). Marcus Aurelius's portrait features are today (and probably were in antiquity) recognizable to anyone familiar with his public imagery; his curly hair and rich, triangular beard correspond approximately to his so-called third portrait type: a portrait image apparently devised for him at Rome around the time of his accession in AD 161. Some of the head's features, however, point to somewhat later portrait styles and it has been suggested that the statue was made in the 170s or even posthumously, after Marcus's death in AD 180 (Fittschen and Zanker (1985) 73; Fittschen (1989)).

The restorers speculated that the horse itself is a 'portrait' of a specific animal, notably because of its individualistic teeth (Accardo (1999) 163). At any rate it is a highly naturalistic portrayal of an almost preternaturally powerful and vigorous stallion with a subtle, dynamic gait. Small details of its skin and bulging musculature have been carefully rendered; bone and veins protrude on its face; peculiarities such as the unusual saddle blanket (possibly Sarmatian in style) have been faithfully represented (Nickel (1989)). The horse is caught in movement. Its raised front-right leg recalls the attitude of a highly trained parade horse on display, but this is misleading: according to the 12th-century *Mirabilia Urbis Romae* – an anonymous description of Rome's sights – the elevated hoof originally rested on the cowering body of a barbarian – a motif shared with the earlier, lost equestrian statue of the emperor Domitian, whose horse stepped on a personification of the River Rhine (Statius, *Silvae* 1.1.50–51). This detail is important for our perception of the statue and its place in the mythology of Marcus Aurelius. Without the submissive enemy he appears, to be sure, as a powerful ruler, but he is in civilian clothes, his expression is impassive – one might say 'philosophical' – and his gesture is more pacific than oppressive. If we restore in our imagination a barbarian figure, even an allegorical one, then the statue becomes a rather more typical representation of Roman victory through violence. Paradoxically, it even recalls a famous 'barbarian' adaptation of the same iconography: the Sassanian rock-reliefs of Shapur I such as that at Naqsh-e Rostam in Iran, in which the mounted Persian king impassively accepts the submission of Roman emperors, probably the emperors Valerian and Philip after the former's defeat at Edessa in AD 260 (Mackintosh (1973)).

The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius is a genuinely exceptional work of art, as much for the skill of its manufacture as for its survival. But in antiquity part of its effectiveness relied on the fact that it belonged within a long and extensive tradition of equestrian honors. Statues of important individuals on horseback had been produced in Rome for several centuries and their ancestry extends back to archaic Greece (Bergemann (1990); cf. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 34.19).³ Their Roman use seems to have increased from the first century BC and in 43 BC the senate and people of Rome apparently voted to honor the youthful Octavian, the future emperor Augustus, with a gilded equestrian bronze in the Forum Romanum (Velleius Paterculus 2.61.3; Zanker (1988) 37–39). Such honors were not limited to the imperial family; a painting from the Praedia of Julia Felix in Pompeii shows a scene of a town forum with equestrian bronzes ranged alongside each other next to a portico, and extant bases in the forum of Pompeii itself bear witness to this kind of arrangement (Bragantini and Sampaolo (2009) 507–509, 511, nos. 288–89, 291; Zanker (1998) 86, 102–103). But rider-statues held a special prestige and within the capital itself the larger-scale works were effectively reserved for honoring the emperor. Thirty-two statues are attested for the city of Rome in all periods. In the fifth century AD, the topographical survey of Rome by Zacharias Rhetor mentions 22 large equestrian statues, probably nearly all of them images of emperors (Valentini and Zucchetti (1940) 320–34, at 332).

The number is considerable, especially given how many of their recipients (including Domitian) fell from grace and suffered the destruction of their public portraits. Statues of the scale and importance of Marcus Aurelius's will have been rare, but they nevertheless constitute an honorific tradition that goes back to the start of the principate. Whoever commissioned the statue of Marcus Aurelius – given its scale, most likely the senate – was declaring the emperor not only worthy of a grandiloquent memorial to his personal virtues, but also suitable for celebration within a line of virtuous rulers that started with the first Augustus himself.

We do not know the specific reason for this reward, nor is it possible to date with any precision given the ambiguities of its portrait features. Because of its military associations it might plausibly be linked, as the majority of scholars have suggested, to Marcus Aurelius's double triumph over the Marcomanni and Sarmatians in AD 176 (cf. Nickel (1989) for the 'Sarmatian' saddle cloth on the horse). Yet its generic character is emphasized by comparison with the famous series of Antonine relief panels preserved both in the Capitoline Museums and, re-used, on the attic of the fourth-century Arch of Constantine (Angelicooussis (1984); Kleiner (1990) 288–95). These sculptures, perhaps originally carved for an honorific arch celebrating Marcus Aurelius's achievements, present the emperor performing a variety of ideal imperial roles such as sacrificing and addressing the troops: the different facets of the perfect ruler's

civil and military persona. In fact, one of these reliefs shows Marcus on his horse, surrounded by soldiers as he shows clemency to two kneeling barbarians in front of the animal's legs. His arm was held out in the same gesture of merciful command that we see in the bronze statue.⁴

The gesture itself is ambivalent (Bergemann (1990) 6–8). It recurs so frequently in Roman imperial art, and has been so often imitated in later art, that it seems a completely natural action for a ruler. It does, of course, imply control. The analogy with the relief panel suggests that it is also a gesture of clemency, though this is undermined by the evidence for the barbarian figure being stamped beneath the horse's hoof. Yet the contradiction is not so stark if we remember that Roman clemency was the gift of the total victor, and Roman peace depended on the comprehensive defeat of a dangerous foe (cf. Pirson (1996)). This public language of imperial honor is very different from the one deemed appropriate for the literary discourse of Roman philosophy that we find in Marcus's own *Meditations*. Many have seen a model for understanding Marcus's gesture in Statius's description of Domitian's colossal equestrian statue (*Silvae* 1.1.37): 'your right hand bids battles stop' (*dextra vetat pugnās*).

A statue of this kind might be expected to have stood in one of the most conspicuous and prestigious locations of the ancient city of Rome. (Domitian's had evidently been set up in the Forum Romanum around AD 91.) Perhaps the statue of Marcus Aurelius was moved from one of the imperial fora in the medieval period, possibly after the importance of most of these spaces declined in the fifth century AD. Yet given the sheer difficulty of moving such a large and heavy work intact (even its removal by crane and lorry in 1981 was a delicate operation) it is possible that it had always stood more or less in its later medieval site at the Lateran in south-east Rome, next to the Basilica of S. Giovanni (Figure 16.2).⁵ The first reliable evidence that it stood at this site relates to the 10th century, when, according to the *Liber Pontificalis* (Duchesne (1955) 252, 259) the *caballus Constantini* ('horse of Constantine') served as a place of punishment. But it was probably already there at least in the eighth century. The fact that in AD 801 Charlemagne transported the equestrian statue of 'Theodoric' at Ravenna to his palace at Aachen – his own 'Lateran' – implies an attempt to emulate the monumental character of Rome's Lateran, which had become by that stage the political center of the city (see e.g. Lachenal (1990a) 3–4; Baumstark (1999) 79).

If the statue was erected at the Lateran site in the later second century AD, the reasons for the location are unclear, though various hypotheses have been proposed (see Bergemann (1990) 106 for critical observations). For example, Marcus had a family connection with that part of the city, having been raised in his grandfather's house there (*HA Marcus* 1.7).

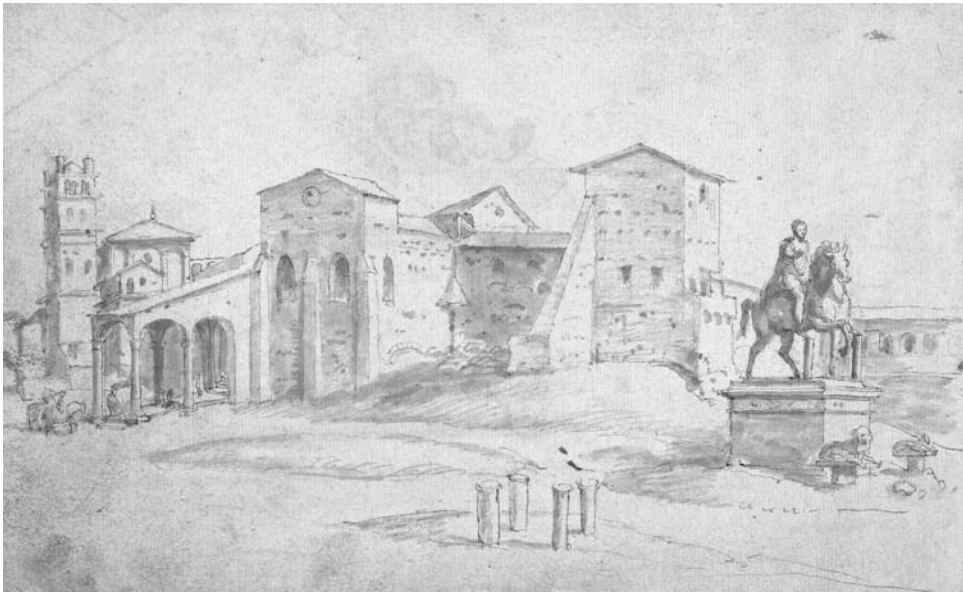


Figure 16.2 Drawing of the Campus Lateranensis by Marten van Heemskerck, circa 1532–36. Berlin Staatliche Museen (Kupferstichkabinett, 79 D 2, fol. 71v). Photo: bpk/Kupferstichkabinett, SMB/Jörg P. Anders.

2. The Statue of Constantine?

It is impossible to be sure why the statue of Marcus Aurelius survived on continuous display after the end of antiquity. From the late third century AD onwards, the practice of erecting public, honorific statues was greatly reduced and portrait statuary disappeared altogether in the seventh century (Stichel (1982); Smith (1985)). As early as the fourth century AD, there is evidence that the original identity of some public portraits had been forgotten. Many were recut and a few were renamed at this time. The famous (and bogus) ‘statue of Christ’ at Caesarea Philippi, which is repeatedly mentioned in fourth- and fifth-century sources, may in fact have been an old statue of the Emperor Hadrian whose identity had been forgotten (Stewart (2007) esp. 31–34, with further references). In the early sixth century, when the western Roman empire had collapsed and Italy was under Gothic rule, Cassiodorus wrote appeals against the threat to Italy’s heritage of public monuments as long neglected bronzes were being melted down and marble sculptures sent to the lime-kilns (*Variae* 7.13, 15).

It has traditionally been believed that the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius survived such oblivion because early Medieval viewers had come to identify it as the first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great.⁶ Although

Marcus Aurelius was still respected in the fourth century, there was no particular reason to remember or celebrate him thereafter; indeed he was associated with Christian persecutions (Kinney (2002) 372–74). In contrast, there were various reasons to preserve a monument of Constantine as the first Christian emperor and protector of Christians. The statue's eventual position next to the Lateran basilica would have reinforced the association, for Constantine himself had developed the church around AD 315. So the re-baptism of the equestrian statue as Constantine was by no means arbitrary or irrational and it may well go back to late antiquity. Nevertheless, it is not explicitly attested before the accounts from the 10th century preserved in the *Liber Pontificalis*. Given the fickleness with which surviving ancient statues were renamed and appropriated in the earlier Middle Ages, we cannot assume that tradition of 'Constantine's' horse extends to late antiquity, though it was clearly well established between the 10th and 12th centuries. As an explanation for the statue's survival, it is very plausible but only hypothetical. Regardless, it has become part of the modern legend of the equestrian image.

In the 12th century at least the identification was negotiable, as different observers sought to make sense of the statue's attributes (Kinney (2002)). The *Mirabilia Urbis Romae* includes a section (15) that rejects the tradition, boldly declaring, 'whoever wants to know the truth should read this. . .' There follows an account of an ancient siege in Rome by an eastern king. A virtuous and well built squire (*armiger*) thereupon offered to rescue the city in exchange for 30 000 sesterces and a victory monument in the form of an excellent horse. He succeeded in defeating the enemy and securing his reward by a cunning ruse. He had noticed that the enemy king relieved himself every night at a certain tree outside the city, and that an owl always hooted when this happened. So he left the city walls on a saddleless horse and used the owl's signal to help him ambush and capture the king. As a result, his victory statue displayed the key elements of the story: the horse had no saddle; the rider extended his hand ready to capture the enemy; the owl stood on the horse's head (this was actually the gathered tuft of mane above its forehead); and the diminutive bound king lay under its hoof. It is a tall tale, but it exhibits a very reasonable approach to the etiology of ancient imagery – an approach that prevailed from late antiquity and throughout the Middle Ages. Only in the Renaissance, and indeed mainly later, in the 18th and early 19th centuries, did more refined methods become normal for interpreting ancient symbols through precise analogies and comparison of sources.

Of course, pre-modern methods resulted in conflicting explanations and the account in the *Mirabilia*, which may have political overtones (challenging the statue's traditional role as a symbol of papal authority), was not the only alternative to the *equus Constantini*. For example, in the early 13th century the English traveler Master Gregory (*Narratio de Mirabilibus Urbis Romae* 4) recorded that although the statue was known to the Roman people as

Constantine, the pilgrims called it Theodoric (the fifth-/sixth-century Gothic king of Italy), and 'the cardinals and clergy of the Roman curia' called it Marcus or Quintus Quirinus (a corruption of the Roman hero Marcus Curtius). For Gregory the 'bird' is reportedly a cuckoo and the barbarian figure is 'some kind of dwarf'. 'It shows', he says, 'a wonderful image of death and final suffering' (so much for the clemency of Marcus Aurelius – but Gregory's response may convey something of the truth of the monument).

Whatever narratives were woven around the statue, standing next to the papal seat at the Lateran Palace, it clearly had a remarkable symbolic presence as an image of authority in a Medieval Rome that retained comparatively little interest in or nostalgia for the physical ruins of antiquity. Arguably its influence is reflected in 12th-century relief sculpture in Italy and France (Lachenal (1990a) 12–13; Kinney (2002) with figs. 15–16) and it appears as a landmark in pictorial maps of Rome in the 14th century, starting with those associated with Paolino da Venezia after 1320 (see e.g. Lachenal (1990a) 36, fig. 25 and pl. III).

3. The Return of Marcus Aurelius

The first accurate artistic representations of the statue date to the early 15th century (see generally Lachenal (1990b) 1–34). The earliest known image of this kind may be a meticulously observed drawing attributed to Pisanello and executed around 1431/2 (Lachenal (1990b) 1–30, fig. 34; Baumstark (1999) 82, fig. 2). By this stage the barbarian figure had vanished and the statue, left with just three legs to support it, needed to be reinforced by pillars (see Figure 16.2, though other drawings seem to show the use of different supports at different times).⁷ The posts set into the earth in the foreground of Heemskerck's drawing are possibly the previous, medieval base for the statue (Fehl (1974)). The horse had apparently been unstable and had fallen or been taken down around 1452. In the 1460s and 1470s it was restored and in 1474 Pope Sixtus IV placed it on the stone pedestal depicted by Heemskerck. Here it remained until 1538 (Kinney (2002) 376–77).

It is worth emphasizing again that only relatively late viewers of the statue had the wherewithal to establish an accurate name for the rider. The identification of ancient portraits is often so securely established today that we easily forget how refined the process is. It is not only dependent on centuries of scholarship and typological comparison: it depends on an understanding that such comparisons are an appropriate way to interpret Roman images. For example, one needs to appreciate that Roman 'likenesses' of individuals are defined by their cohesion and resemblance to each other as much as their relation to the 'sitter', that they are relatively invariable, and that coins therefore offer a key point of

reference. It was particularly because of the Renaissance interest in ancient coin portraits that the equestrian statue could first be compared to second-century images of emperors during the 15th century.

It was after about 1480 that the consensus began to settle on Marcus Aurelius (Fittschen and Zanker (1985) 73, no. 7; Baumstark (1999) 86). Given the resilience of incorrect interpretations and ‘factoids’ in modern archaeological scholarship, the Renaissance re-identification of the equestrian statue gained currency with surprising speed and it was regularly adhered to in the 16th century. It had considerable importance for the treatment of the statue during that century, for especially after the first printed editions of the *Meditations* in 1558 and 1559, Marcus Aurelius became the archetypal philosopher prince and extant images gave a face to the imagined personality of this imperial paragon (Parisi Presicce (1990) 12). The most important of these images included the Aurelian panels, which were transferred to the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline Hill from 1515. Marcus Aurelius was a fitting patron for the Renaissance popes’ reinvention of Rome and at the start of 1538, Pope Paul III (Alessandro Farnese) reinstalled the equestrian statue on a high base in front of the Conservators’ and Senators’ Palaces on the Capitoline. By 1569 it was the centerpiece of a completely reinvented piazza constructed after designs by Michelangelo Buonarroti and using an architectural and monumental language borrowed from Roman antiquity (Thies (1982) for full documentation; Baumstark (1999) 86–88 with figs. 6–7). The new site was open towards the north-west so that the piazza (and the mounted emperor) faced away from the center of the ancient city and towards the Vatican. The new base bore a dedicatory inscription for Marcus Aurelius on one side, and on the other an account of the pope’s restoration couched in suitably classical phrases:

The bronze equestrian statue set up for Marcus Antoninus Pius by the senate and people of Rome, while he was still alive, subsequently knocked down in the various vicissitudes of the city and re-erected by the pontifex maximus⁸ Sixtus IV at the Lateran Basilica, the pontifex maximus Paul III transferred from its humbler site into the Area Capitolina and dedicated it, in order that he might respect the memory of the best emperor and restore to his country [*patria*], its distinctions and adornments.

The involvement of Michelangelo contributed almost immediately to a new chapter in the legend of the statue: its role as an artistic *exemplum* of almost unparalleled influence.

Helmut Nickel hardly exaggerates when he states that the statue of Marcus Aurelius, ‘served as a model for the majority of equestrian statues throughout the entire history of European art’ (Nickel (1989) 17). From Pisanello onwards the statue served continuously as a definitive model both for equestrian

naturalism and for the iconography of the mounted ruler. This was due no doubt to the accessibility of the sculpture as well as its own virtuoso observation of nature. From the middle of 15th century it was repeatedly copied and emulated in sculpture, first of all in a famous bronze statuette by Antonio di Pietro Averlino ('Filarete') cast in 1465, which has a claim to be one of the first small bronzes of the Renaissance (Baumstark (1999) 82, fig. 3). It then effectively reintroduced the equestrian portrait into the public imagery of power and civic virtue. In the 15th century Donatello is especially associated with this development. His statue of the general Erasmo da Narni ('Gattamelata'), which was erected in Padua around 1447–53, lacks both the impassive idealism and the implied violence of Marcus Aurelius's statue, but the Roman statue was clearly its model. It would be hard to overestimate the technical and artistic achievement of a bronze statue on the scale of the Gattamelata, which was rivaled in the 15th century only by Andrea del Verrocchio's statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni in Venice (1480s), and the success with which Renaissance sculptors rediscovered the skills of antiquity in emulation of the Marcus Aurelius statue.

In the following centuries the statue of Marcus Aurelius was reproduced and imitated countless times with strong, if selective, fidelity to details of the original work (Nickel (1989) 17). It has served as the ultimate model for a long line of bronze equestrian monuments after the antique, each stressing different aspects of the subject's persona, including images of Cosimo de' Medici (by Giamologna circa 1590), Louis XIV (Girardon (1699)), Bismarck (Hildebrand (1910)), among many others.⁹ By the 18th century it was a famous tourist attraction, permanently associated with the Capitoline Hill and the Campidoglio. Already in the 19th century it achieved the disembodied immortality of mass-production in souvenir images and small-scale replicas, pictures, and prints.

As with all such sculptural celebrities, the statue of Marcus Aurelius acquired a significance far beyond the object itself. It had become – to use a much abused term – an iconic work of art. Its removal from the Campidoglio in 1981 was therefore a controversial and momentous change. In the previous century, during which Rome had become the capital of a united Italy and had grown far beyond its pre-industrial limits, the statue had undergone some conservation but had suffered inconspicuously from exposure to pollution, not to mention its survival of a bomb attack in 1979 (itself a testament to the monument's significance). At the time of the apparently necessary removal no decision had been made about its future and the financial resources for conservation were yet to be found (Accardo (1999) 141), but there was some expectation that the statue would be returned to Michelangelo's plinth outside the Capitoline Museums. The scientific study of the statue eventually took place at Istituto Centrale del Restauro in Rome. The bronze was subjected to a variety of metallurgical analyses and observations, yielding a wealth of

information about its manufacture and subsequent fortunes (Vaccaro and Sommella (1989) 205–77; Parise Presicce (1990) 109–11; Accardo (1999)). With the conservators concerned for its future condition if it should be returned to the public piazza, the decision was made to preserve the statue inside the Museo Capitolino. A garishly clean, computer-designed bronze replica finally took its place in the Campidoglio in 1997 while Rome prepared for its millennial celebrations. There was a political outcry over the decision to keep Marcus's statue as a museum exhibit rather than a public monument.¹⁰ Yet after so much careful conservation and technical examination, stripped of its accretions to reveal the emperor in his ancient, gilded form, the statue had effectively become a different work of art: an antiquity to be conserved rather than part of the monumental furnishing of modern Rome. The removal of the statue represents, in a sense, the 'deconstruction' of a monument that was only ever partly the product of antiquity. That deconstruction is, of course, our own age's characteristic contribution to the reception-history of Marcus Aurelius's statue.

NOTES

1. Several of the most celebrated examples are, surprisingly, bronzes, even though bronze generally survived the Middle Ages less successfully than marble sculpture. These include: the horse-team now on the Basilica di San Marco, Venice; the Serpent Column in the ancient hippodrome in Istanbul; and in Rome, the Spinario ('Thorn-puller'), the Capitoline Wolf, the 'Camillus', and the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. The last three are all connected in having been admired in Renaissance Rome and they were among the works removed to the Capitoline hill in the 15th and 16th centuries. See e.g. Haskell and Penny (1981) esp. 7–11.
2. For a summary of the key features of the statue, see its Capitoline Museum catalogue entry by K. Fittschen: Fittschen and Zanker (1985) 72–74, no. 67, pls. 76–77. For a technical overview in the light of the restoration see Parise Presicce (1990) 75–84, and more fully Vaccaro and Sommella (1989).
3. Further documentation of the equestrian tradition, as well as bronze working, in classical art is to be found in Pallottino et al. (1979).
4. Note however that the panel was restored in the 16th century, partly on the model of the equestrian statue (see e.g. Parise Presicce (1990) 12–15).
5. For a summary of theories see Parise Presicce (1990), 86–87.
6. The explanation goes back at least to Carlo Fea's 1784 edition of Winckelmann: *Storia delle arti di disegno presso gli antichi*, vol. 3, Rome, 414.
7. For Heemskerck's drawing see Hülsen and Egger (1913) 36–39; Fehl (1974).
8. This ancient phrase for the chief priest of Rome is applied to popes in 15th- and 16th-century inscriptions and has classicizing overtones.

9. The iconography had already become a cliché by the early 18th century. Cf. Raguenet (1723) 9: 'The Antients have at least display'd some sort of Fertility of Genius in the Art of inventing Monuments, to eternize the Glory of their Princes ... but those who meddle with this Task now-a-days, seem to have nothing in their Heads but an Equestrian Statue.'
10. For the continuing controversy see e.g. *The Sunday Times*, July 22, 2001, 28.

FURTHER READING

The bibliography on the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius is appropriately monumental. Few individual sculptures have received such attention (and almost none over the continuous course of 500 years). The works cited here are a small selection of what exists. Nevertheless, detailed, academic treatments of the statue have not been so common until recently. In particular, the restoration and removal of the statue produced new interest and information, and gave rise to several lavishly produced surveys of the history, artistic influence, and technical aspects of the work; Vaccaro and Sommella (1989) and Accardo et al. (1999) offer excellent post-restoration surveys with important scholarly articles; the former is now a key study of the statue and although not all of its essays are specifically cited here, all are important and useful. Recent work is also encapsulated, with excellent illustrations, in the English version of the catalogue by Parisi Presicce (1990). Much of the literature is in German or Italian, and Fittschen's catalogue entry (Fittschen and Zanker (1985) 72–74, no. 67, pls. 76–77) remains an important point of reference, though written before the restoration. Kinney (2002) focuses on Medieval narrative interpretations of the statue, but also serves as an excellent English-language discussion of all aspects of the work. Lachenal's two-part article (1990a) and (1990b) is a detailed survey of the statue's reception in the Middle Ages and Renaissance Rome, with a particular emphasis on its role as a symbol of political authority. Bergemann (1990) provides a good overview of the statue and places it in its broader Roman context. For shorter discussions note Haskell and Penny (1981) 252–55, no. 55 (with an emphasis on reception and artistic influence) and Kleiner (1990) 271 (in the context of a broader discussion of Marcus's portrait types). All the above (and notably Fittschen's entry) provide further and more detailed references.

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CHAPTER 17

Coins

Susanne Börner

1. Introduction

Marcus Aurelius' coinage is surprisingly varied and extensive. Already during his reign as Caesar under the rule of Antoninus Pius (AD 138–61), a large number of coins and also medaillons¹ were minted for Marcus Aurelius Caesar. Thus, not only his portrait, but also the virtues and values he stood for could be disseminated. Precisely who was responsible for the choice of motifs can no longer be reconstructed exactly today. It is only certain that the ruler exerted some influence on the choice of types, and that at least no motifs were struck against his will as can be shown by an example from Trajan's coinage. At the beginning of his rule, coins were erroneously minted with the title of *pater patriae* (RIC II 31), which Trajan had rejected (Plinius, *Panegyricus* XXI 1). The reaction came immediately: the issue was stopped and the title was removed (Wolters (2003) 189). It is also beyond doubt that the motifs chosen caught the attention of the contemporaries. In addition to the second century's limited range of media – by contrast to our present situation dominated by radio, television, the Internet, or daily newspapers – there is extensive and compelling evidence for the perception and correct interpretation of coin motifs in antiquity (among others: Suetonius, *Tiberius* 58,1; *Nero* 25,2; *Talmud*, *Aboda Zara* IV 52 b). The same can be assumed for medaillons. Of course, the number of recipients of the latter may have been somewhat smaller – at least, if Curtis L. Clay's hypothesis is correct (see Note 1), and medaillons are to be interpreted as New Year's gifts to high-ranking officials and military officers. On top of that, the medaillons' value as a 'means of transport' for the emperors' self-representation would have been incomparably higher than that of the coins, because the recipient had been chosen personally.

Frankly, the medaillons stand somewhat apart from the regular coin emissions, as far as their often unusual and – due to the larger space for pictures – varied repertoire of forms is concerned. But iconographically as well as formally, they are by no means to be seen as independent of other coin motifs, but complement them granting us a view of the complete scope of images and their thematic orientation. For these reasons, they will also be treated in the following.

2. Marcus Aurelius Caesar (AD 138–61)

Hardly can an emperor's personal development and age be observed more clearly in his coinage than those of Marcus Aurelius. From 139 onwards, shortly after the accession of Antoninus Pius, the portrait of the young Caesar is depicted on coins for the first time. The picture of the then 18-year-old Marcus appears on the reverse of the emperor's coins in order to make the designated successor to the throne, who had been adopted in the spring of 138, publicly known. From the following year to the death of Antoninus Pius in March 161, coins and medaillons were regularly struck also for the young Caesar.

In the decades during which the young Marcus lived at the side of Antoninus Pius in Rome and was brought up to become his successor, Marcus' portrait on his coins and medaillons changed at certain times, which, however, cannot reliably be connected with particular incidents. The changes seem rather to reflect reality and the intention to depict the successor true to life. All in all, about six 'stages' of development can be observed in the coin portraits of the 'Caesar period' (Figures 17.1–17.6) – from the round, smooth boy's face to a one with a sparse, downy beard, to a slender face with a full beard increasingly matching his adoptive father's beard style. From about 157 onwards, Marcus wears his beard on the chin longer than his father, and with it, he sets himself off from the emperor to some degree. The effort which had obviously been devoted to the detailed portraiture of the successor to the throne shows clearly how painstakingly the coin portraits were designed.

Naturally, this also holds true for the representations on the reverses of Marcus Aurelius Caesar. His issues begin, as has been said, in AD 140. At first, they are limited to representations of his military activities, embodied, for example, by his personified honor, *Honos* (RIC III 422, 1231, 1237; Strack (1937) nos. 120, 919), of his youth, *Iuventas* (RIC III 423 a/b, 1232, 1238; Strack (1937) nos. 121, 920), and – as fits a designated successor of Antoninus Pius – of his impeccable behavior towards gods and human beings, *Pietas* (RIC III 424 a–d; Strack (1937) no. 122). The latter is accomplished by combining the legend PIETAS AUG with five sacrificial implements representing the Caesar's *cooptatio* into different priestly offices: a sacrificial knife, an *aspergillum* (instrument for sprinkling) (*ThesCRA* V 2.b (2006) 188), a pitcher, a *lituus*



Figure 17.1 Aureus of Antoninus Pius, AD 140. Rev.: M. Aurelius Caesar. *Numismatica Ars Classica* 49 (October 21, 2008), no. 235; RIC III 417e.



Figure 17.2 Sestertius of M. Aurelius Caesar, AD 140–44. Obv.: M. Aurelius Caesar. *Numismatica Ars Classica* 51 (March 5, 2009), no. 1016; RIC III 1232b.



Figure 17.3 Aureus of M. Aurelius Caesar, AD 145. Obv.: M. Aurelius Caesar. *Numismatica Ars Classica* 41 (November 20, 2007), no. 94; RIC III 432.



Figure 17.4 Sestertius of M. Aurelius Caesar, AD 147. Obv.: M. Aurelius Caesar. Hess-Divo AG 314 (May 4, 2009), no. 1564; RIC III 1248.



Figure 17.5 Aureus of M. Aurelius Caesar, AD 152. Obv.: M. Aurelius Caesar. Auktionshaus H. D. Rauch 84 (May 13, 2009), no. 591; RIC III 452d.



Figure 17.6 Sestertius of M. Aurelius Caesar, AD 160. Obv.: M. Aurelius Caesar. Numismatik Lanz München 141 (May 26, 2008), no. 463; RIC III 1352.



Figure 17.7 AE-medallion of M. Aurelius Caesar, AD 145. Rev.: Aeneas and Ascanius sacrificing. Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin [18200638]. Photo: L.-J. Lübke.



Figure 17.8 Sestertius of M. Aurelius Caesar, AD 149. Rev.: Pietas holding child on left arm and stretching out her right hand towards another child. Auktionshaus Meister & Sonntag 5 (September 19, 2007), no. 142; RIC III 1280.

(curved staff of the augurs) (*ThesCRA* V 2.b (2006) 394–95), and a ladle. These cult instruments provide information about the specific priesthoods Marcus Aurelius held at this time: The knife and the ladle allude to his membership in the *Collegium Pontificum*, the *lituus* and the pitcher to the augurate (Siebert (1999) 132–34). It is not, however, possible that here, the *aspergillum*, symbolizes the office of Pontifex Maximus, as Anne Siebert believes, because Antoninus Pius held this office exclusively throughout his entire reign up to his death. Therefore, the *aspergillum* simply stands for Marcus Aurelius' membership among the college of the Pontiffs.

At the same time, the emperor's coins equate Marcus with Ascanius, Aeneas' son (*RIC* III 91, 615, 627; Strack (1937) nos. 89, 868, 903/4). Sometime later, the emperor's medaillons (*Numismatica Ars Classica* O (May 13, 2004) no. 2016) and those of the Caesar (Strack (1937) 592; Gneecchi II (1924) 37 no. 84 pl. 66,6) show Aeneas and Ascanius sacrificing together. Through the equation of the emperor with Aeneas, suggested by his cognomen 'Pius' (Cassius Dio 70,2,1; *HA Vita Hadriani* 24,3–5; *HA Vita Pii* 2,3), the equation of his adoptive son with Ascanius becomes increasingly obvious. In addition, the motifs' composition strongly resembles that of representations on the Augustan Ara Pacis (Dressel (1972/3) 65–69 no. 33 pl. V 4) and fits perfectly into the catalogue of virtues of the first Roman emperor (Figure 17.7). The relationship between the emperor and his designated successor can be observed on coins and medaillons especially at the beginning of a reign. This may be a result of the then still increased need for public manifestation of unity and harmony within the imperial family.

Another example of parallel pictorial motifs for the *princeps* and for the Caesar is citing the Heracles myth.² While in the Aeneas myth, correct religious behavior stands in the foreground, the myth of the hero Heracles obviously carries martial connotations; once again the focus is on religious virtues and military prowess. Common to both is their relation to Rome. The killing of Cacus, which is the most prominent subject of the medaillon issue, was not chosen arbitrarily. It is a side aspect of Hercules' Tenth Labor (Virgil, *Aeneid* VIII 184–275), in which the hero is supposed to bring back Geryon's cattle from the island of Erytheia. On his way back to Greece, he passes through Latium and takes a rest by the Tiber. While Hercules is sleeping, the giant Cacus, who, until then, has been tyrannizing the local population, steals some of the cattle. The hero follows his tracks and kills him in his cave. After the monster's death, King Euander supposedly dedicates the Ara Maxima at the Forum Boarium, the cattle market of the Roman Tiber harbor. Precisely there, at the Ara Maxima, Virgil lets Aeneas meet the said King Euander on the Feast of Hercules, and both of them sacrifice to the hero. Aeneas then steps from this altar onto the site of the future Rome (Virgil, *Aeneid* VIII 102–25). The motifs' relevance for the foundation myth of the city of Rome is obvious; in

addition, both heroes carry out *duri labores* (drudgery), which predestines them as the ideal models, resp. as an *imitatio* in the ruler's *imago* (Wlosok (1967) 66–67 with n. 53/54; Simon (2000) 86). Moreover, the Cacus myth can be understood as a symbol of the liberation and protection of the Roman people, and thus was exceptionally well suited for the visualization of the principate's goals.

The medaillons are not the only ones to pick up thematic complexes common to the *princeps* and the Caesar. Regular denominations also show examples of a coordinated iconographic program, in most cases in order to mark a special occasion. For example, when Marcus Caesar marries Faustina in the spring of 145, the coinage does not only refer to this official event, but also, by bearing the legends SPQR OPTIMO PRINCIPI (Strack (1937) no. 1001; *RIC* III 827) in an oak wreath on the emperor's reverses, and IUVENTUS³ (Strack (1937) nos. 956, 964; *RIC* III 1261/2) also in an oak wreath on the Caesar's reverses, it emphasizes their solidarity as well as the Caesar's status as designated successor. The phenomenon of congruent pictorial composition is employed again as a means of emphasizing unity and harmony, towards the end of Antoninus' reign in the year 160 – then, however, in order to stress the harmony of the entire *domus Augusta* in view of the emperor's imminent death. This is achieved by presenting the personal divinities of the imperial family's members on their medaillons in a similar way, namely riding on the animals associated with them;⁴ the simultaneous issue of the medaillons makes it obvious that the motifs are connected with each other.

These personal divinities are central to the *princeps* and Marcus especially. They are retained throughout the entire period of issue and show a distinctive distribution: While Jupiter appears on the emperor's coins and medaillons, Minerva can be found on the numismatic material of the Caesar. Whereas Minerva is still taken up on the emperor's coinage occasionally at the beginning of Antoninus Pius' reign – mostly not alone – depictions of her are limited to the young successor's numismatic material later. The choice of this goddess as a personal divinity is of particular interest, because she is on the one hand a member of the Capitoline triad, together with Jupiter. As his daughter she is also closely related to him. This undoubtedly refers to the equally close relationship between the *princeps* and the Caesar. On the other hand, Minerva is a warlike goddess, and thereby fits in perfectly with the formulation of the potential successor's martial *imago*. The deciding factor in the choice of Minerva as a personal deity, however, may be the fact that she is also the goddess of wisdom, and can, therefore, be regarded as the only (!) allusion to Marcus Aurelius' enthusiasm for philosophy in the Caesarian coinage. In this respect, the goddess is particularly suited for reflecting all of the Caesar's important characteristics as well as emphasizing the harmony with his adoptive father.

There are, however, certain topics which are exclusive to the emperor and could not be addressed by the Caesar. Obviously, certain aspects of content, particularly in regard to events of public relevance such as donations of money and grain to the people of Rome or imperial anniversaries, were quite intentionally restricted to the *princeps* – above all, in order to consolidate his position. However, this does not suggest at all that only less important topics were communicated by the numismatic material minted for the Caesar. In his case, it was, first of all, the great events of public interest as for instance his marriage to the emperor's daughter Faustina II which found a strong echo in coinage. Likewise, the numerous children born to the couple found their expression in coinage correspondingly often and intensively as a result of their importance for the stability and continuity of the imperial family. That the Caesar was endowed with the *tribunicia potestas* (*HA Vita Marci* 6,6) on the occasion of the birth of his first daughter on 30 November, 147 (*Inscr.It.* XIII 1, 207 = *AE* (1946) 204) demonstrates the paramount importance of ensuring the succession. The *tribunicia potestas* was from this point on renewed annually. Since then Marcus Aurelius' coins can be dated exactly to at least one year by the regular numbering of this office. The births in the imperial family were not only a topic on the Caesar's numismatic material. They can also be found on the reverses of the emperor's coins as well as on those of the younger Faustina, and sometimes even on those of the Diva Faustina. In this respect, it is striking that the resonance to the births is often strongest on the emperor's coinage. In some cases, as for example in the year 160, the birth of a new child can even be shown to figure earlier on the emperor's coins than on those of the child's father.⁵ This may, first of all, be a result of the fact that in the reign of Antoninus Pius, it is still above all *his* dynasty which is stabilized through his daughter's *fecunditas* (fertility), and not (yet) the Caesar's. This might also explain why the depiction of a female person with a varying number of children is combined with the inscription PIETAS or PIETATI AUG on the motifs of Antoninus Pius and Marcus (Figure 17.8). It seems as if the concept of *pietas*, which is so important to Antoninus Pius, is intentionally connected with his person with regard to the dynasty's continuity in particular, and also with that of the Caesar in order to manifest his claim to rule. The emperor's *pietas* to some extent becomes the prerequisite for the continuity of the dynasty, and, with it, the *fecunditas* of his daughter appears to be also a result of his behavior and the gods' benevolence induced by it. Particularly towards the end of his reign, from circa AD 156 onwards, this constellation is increasingly intensely formulated and thus the connection of *pietas* and *fecunditas* ensures the stability of Antonine rule, based on the fertile marriage of Marcus Aurelius Caesar and his wife, the *princeps'* daughter.

3. Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (AD 161–69)

The dual principate of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, which had begun in March 161 after the death of Antoninus Pius, is an absolute novelty in the history of Roman imperial rule. Since Lucius Verus and Marcus had been jointly adopted by Antoninus Pius still in the reign of Hadrian in the year 138, Lucius had only rarely appeared in public. In contrast to Marcus Caesar and both Faustinas, he was granted no coinage of his own, not even at the time when he himself held high political offices such as the consulate. His portrait was not struck, not even on the imperial family's reverses, except for a single instance, at the very beginning of Pius' reign, in the year 140, when he was depicted together with Pius and Marcus on a quadriga on the occasion of the emperor's joint consulate with Marcus. But this changed in the year 161: Lucius was elevated to the office of co-emperor and a coinage of his own was naturally initiated for him as well. Though there are many congruencies with the coinage of Marcus, some quite distinct differences can be made out. The first joint emission of the emperors begins immediately in March 161.⁶ It is most striking that, while Marcus sets his now 15th tribunician power on his coins in the usual way, Lucius had not yet been honored with the *tribunicia potestas*. This in fact changes from the second emission onwards, but even then, Marcus still ranks clearly higher than Lucius, because he is now distinguished by the title of *pontifex maximus*, which he alone bears, though not regularly, on coins. The difference in the *auctoritas* (authority) of the two emperors is also recognizable in the choice of motifs. An example: In the first joint emission of Marcus and Lucius, *concordia* (harmony), above all, is naturally prominent; it is supposed to show that both *principes* consented to the joint accession to the throne, and that their government would be harmonious. The *Providentia Deorum*, the wise foresight of the gods, however appears only on Marcus' coins as an expression of the gods' hand in the decision on the joint accession (*MIR* (1986) 11–18). The fact that she is mentioned only in the first emission of Marcus shows that the decision on this accession was naturally not least his responsibility, and, in addition, is divinely legitimized. The situation is similar for the representation of *Liberalitas* (generosity). Obviously, there was a joint donation of the emperors to the populace on the occasion of the accession to the throne. So not only Marcus, but both *principes* were shown sitting on a pedestal (*MIR* (1986) nos. 12–16 and 8). Nonetheless, this motif is minted only for Marcus. As in the reign of Antoninus Pius, it is the dominant *princeps*, who first coins the themes of public interest. However, an improvement of Lucius' status as co-emperor in relation to that of Marcus *Caesar* between 138 and 161 can be deduced by the fact that at that time no events of public relevance such as donations of money or grain appear on the coins of Marcus Caesar. Still within 161, but in the second emission of this year, just one

emission later than for Marcus, the *Liberalitas* appears on Lucius' coinage, too. Marcus Aurelius owed his greater *auctoritas* to several factors: he was nine years older than his brother, he could draw on more experience from his long time as Caesar, and furthermore, Marcus had not only held the *tribunicia potestas* for 15 years, but had been consul thrice, whereas Lucius had only been consul twice. Therefore, Marcus – as has already been mentioned above with regard to his 'Caesarship' – was considered the clear favorite and the only Caesar under Antoninus Pius, and thus the sole designated successor. As a consequence, it makes all the more sense to emphasize the *concordia* of both of the rulers in the first years of their dual principate.

With regard to the difference in status between Marcus and Lucius, the military aspect is of particular interest. In the second year of their joint rule, Lucius was sent to the east to meet the threat of the Parthians (*HA Vita Marci* 8,9). The latter had taken advantage of the change of rule and had replaced the pro-Roman king in Armenia with a member of the Parthian royal family (Birley (1966) 160/1). It was not the emperor, though, but primarily his competent generals who fought the military battles there. One of those was C. Avidius Cassius, of whom one would hear again more than 10 years later. The victories which had been won in the east under Lucius' supreme command and the titles connected with them were, of course, also communicated in the coinage. It is interesting that Lucius immediately assumed victory titles such as ARMENIACUS or PARTHICUS MAXIMUS, the former 163, the latter 165 (Kneissl (1969) 97–110), whereas Marcus, who had remained in Rome, also took on the titles, but always a year later. This raises the question of whether he adopted the titles on purpose on the first anniversary of their bestowal to Lucius (Wolters (1999) 324). This could be interpreted as a show of *modestia* (humility) by Marcus as well as a sign of his respect for his adoptive brother's achievements. Only the victory title of MEDICUS was adopted by both of them simultaneously in the year 166, on the occasion of their triumph in Rome (Wolters (1999) 324/5). In the scope of this public event, their equal rank in military affairs, which had already become evident through the grant of a triumph to both emperors, was now emphasized after all. Marcus' modesty thus is limited to the first two victory titles, whereas public self-representation takes priority with regard to the third one. It also indicates a limited extent of this restraint, that in all cases in which victory titles were assumed, the second to fourth acclamation as *Imperator* associated with these titles seems not to have been adopted only by Lucius at first but also by Marcus at the same time (Kienast (2004) 139, 144; e.g. *CIL* VIII 14435; *AE* (1960) 21 = *AE* (1982) 795).

But what does Marcus' reticence concerning Lucius' military successes actually signify? Does it really indicate some sort of equality between the two emperors?

Probably in 163, (Kienast (2004) 144/5), Lucius married Marcus' daughter Lucilla. This is a delicate matter, inasmuch as it had originally been planned to marry him to her mother, Faustina Minor, during Hadrian's lifetime (*HA Vita Veri* 2,3). Faustina however, had been married to Marcus since the spring of 145 and had borne him at least 10 children (Ameling (1992) 161). Lucilla was the means to the end of binding Lucius more closely to Marcus' family – possibly also in order to control him more closely, unless the remarks in the *Historia Augusta*, about his profligate life in Syria at the side of a mistress (*HA Vita Veri* 7,1–10 and also Lucian, *Eikón*) are just a topos (Pausch (2007) 132–36). It is in any case surprising that this marriage and also the preceding engagement were not announced explicitly on imperial coins as for instance Marcus' marriage to Faustina (Strack (1937) no. 826; *RIC* III 601) and later Commodus' marriage to Crispina.⁷ The birth of Lucilla's and Lucius' common daughter found no significant echo in the imperial coinage, just as little as the subsequent births of Marcus' and Faustina's younger children. This is quite surprising, especially in view of the earlier, in this regard relevant and meaningful issues from the reign of Antoninus Pius. It probably has to be seen against the background of the contemporary political situation. The various external threats to the empire and combating them successfully were quite obviously of greater concern at that time than the continuity of the dynasty, which had been so important under Antoninus Pius, but was now finally ensured by at least one living son, namely Commodus. Only in the coinage of the two mothers, do various allusions to the births of the children appear (e.g. *MIR* (1986) Lu 9–6).

In AD 166, Lucius returned to Rome. Together with Marcus, he celebrated the triumph over the Parthians granted by the Senate as well as the Quinquennalia, which probably took place at the same time. In this respect, some numismatic peculiarities strike the eye. The year's first emission – before the joint triumph – shows a completely independent coinage of both of the emperors whose motifs do not overlap at all. Marcus' motifs relate to civil themes, those of Lucius all carry connotations of military victories without exception. In the second emission of the year – minted probably immediately before the triumph – the picture is much more harmonious. All of the coin motifs, the civil as well as the military ones, are used for both rulers – except for the *congiarium* (donation), which is indicated for Lucius only through the personification of *Liberalitas*. For Marcus, however, it is represented by the figurative depiction of the distribution as well. The third emission of that year issued parallel to the triumph is also designed rather congruently for both emperors. The main difference lies in the motif of the enthroned Roma (*MIR* (1986) 138–8 and 9; 139–8), which was issued exclusively for Marcus, who had remained in Rome up to then as is well known. Therefore, his close relationship to the capital is emphasized more strongly. A medaillon which had been minted

exclusively for Lucius fits in well with the subject matter of the triumph. It shows the emperor in the company of Roma, who gives Jupiter a *victoriola* (*MIR* (1986) 1035–11). The victories won are thus dedicated to the Father of the Gods, who only appears on Marcus' numismatic material. It stands to reason that this dedication can be interpreted as a 'handover of victory' to the higher ranking emperor, which again reveals Lucius' status in comparison with Marcus.

In the spring of the year 168, both emperors set out together for the first time to the Danubian provinces. At this time, the central goddess Minerva, so often depicted for Marcus Caesar, is engraved again on *dupondii* and *asses*. She had been depicted only once since then, also by Marcus in 164. It is interesting that in both cases, a divinity was chosen also for Lucius which was struck for him parallel to Marcus' Minerva. For instance in 164, it was the hero Hercules (*MIR* (1986) 77–12 and 16), in 168, Mars. Obviously, no 'personal' god had been chosen for him – both gods also appear on Marcus' issues – the emphasis was placed only on military prowess.

In conclusion, it must be noted that the choice of motifs had changed significantly since the reign of Antoninus Pius. It is striking that 'private' events such as the engagement and the marriage of Lucius and Lucilla as well as the birth of further children obviously are depicted less frequently than on earlier emissions. The focus lies clearly on military incidents, which are represented by their conventional personifications. In general, the diversity of motifs decreases noticeably now – especially in comparison with the predecessor. There are no innovations or creations of new motifs worth mentioning. The myths which had often been depicted on coins and had been associated with the imperial family are absent now. Instead, it turns out that the emissions of both emperors show very close parallels in their design. This, of course, is supposed to emphasize the harmonious cooperation in their dual principate. In addition, the small number and short period of the consecration issues for Antoninus Pius is remarkable. They don't stand comparison with the immense number of issues Antoninus Pius had minted for his deceased wife, which may, of course, be owed to her status as the dynasty's 'progenitrix'.

4. Marcus Aurelius between War and Planning His Succession (AD 169–80)

After Lucius' sudden death at the beginning of AD 169, he was consecrated as Divus Verus, was buried in Hadrian's Mausoleum, and was commemorated with several consecration issues which were quite conventional in iconography and design and even smaller in number than those for the deceased Antoninus Pius. After his co-emperor's burial, Marcus departed on his first *expeditio*

Germanica. This is shown quite obviously in the 18th and especially in the 19th emission by types such as ADLOCUT(io) or PROPECTIO AUG (*MIR* (1986) 179–6 and 190/1–6), just as FORT(una) RED(ux) (*MIR* (1986) 193–4 and 9). The latter emission is suddenly interrupted in mid 170. None of the motifs are repeated, but several goddesses and personifications, who seem to carry no further meaning, replace the warlike types of the 19th emission, which expressed a certain confidence about the victory by depicting *Victoria* thrice (*MIR* (1986) 196–4; 197–4 and 9; 198–8 and 9). In all probability, this peculiarity has to be seen in the context of the simultaneous invasions of North Italy by the Marcomanni and Quadi (Cassius Dio 72,3,2; Lucian, *Alexandros* 48; Ammianus Marcellinus 29,6,1), which has already been investigated quite extensively.⁸ The utter surprise over this attack and the absolute horror instilled by it may be the reasons for the interruption of the 19th emission and the complete change of the motifs. Once again, the immediate reaction of coin motifs to an urgent situation reveals how strongly the choice of coin motifs was subject to current events, and how well they can be cited as an indicator for changes in foreign and also in domestic policy. A similar breach between two emissions can be observed in 178. The 35th emission ends in favor of an almost meaningless 36th and 37th emission, whereby Reinhard Wolters (Wolters (1999) 334–37) tried to demonstrate that the stock of motifs which Wolfgang Szaivert (*MIR* (1986) 136) considered to be an ‘addition’ has to be inserted between the 35th and 36th emissions. The specific reason for the interruption cannot be uncovered with certainty, though in this case, too, similar military incidents in the North may have been decisive.

The coinage of Marcus’ son Commodus, who had assumed the title of Caesar in 166, was rather modest. The coins did not present him as the only living son and new co-emperor, or at least as the designated successor immediately after Lucius’ death, as one might assume. Probably in 166 the portrait of Commodus appeared on an obverse with that of his brother Annianus, who was still alive then, on the reverse (*MIR* (1986) 1049–13), on the occasion of their joint nomination as Caesars. Commodus is not depicted again until 172. His portrait re-appears first on the reverse of one of Marcus’ medallions, which may be dated to the last days of December 172 (*MIR* (1986) 1057–1). Interestingly, the title GERMANICUS, which Marcus had just won, is included in the Caesar’s titulature; he thus ‘shared’ the victory with the designated successor. The use of this title, just won by Marcus, on one of the Caesar’s medallions is all the more striking as it appears on only one contemporary sesterce of the emperor (*MIR* (1986) 255–6; Wolters (1999) 327). This illustrates the Caesar’s status as well as the emperor’s efforts to present him as his successor in spite of his tender age of 11 years. It is also an attempt to give him an air of military experience – one could have depicted the designated successor at a joint sacrifice with the emperor just as well.

The title GERMANICUS is re-assumed by Marcus as late as 175 – an act which could be comparable to the renewal of the second acclamation as Imperator won in 142 under Antoninus Pius in connection with the new victories in Britannia in the years 156–58 (Strack (1937) 22/3). Simultaneously, coins are issued for the young Caesar to a greater extent for the first time. The reason for both of these changes is, without any doubt, one of the major crises of Marcus' reign, the revolt of Avidius Cassius. The revolt made it necessary to re-assume the title which had already been bestowed before, while possibly new victories in the North may have provided an additional motivation. Likewise, Marcus and Commodus assume the title of SARMATICUS simultaneously and use it in the obverse legend from the autumn of 175 onwards. This emphasizes the military prowess of the emperor – and his Caesar – though one could not deny that the usurper could claim military competence, too, in view of his many victories, for example, in the Parthian campaigns. The emperor, by contrast, had only taken titles from Lucius in the past and had used titles like GERMANICUS only reluctantly. Now, it was important to demonstrate his power. On the level of domestic policy, this was done by raising the Caesar's status. Immediately after the revolt became known, Commodus was sent to the province where his father was staying, the *toga virilis* (men's toga) was given to him (Cassius Dio 72,22,2; *HA Vita Marci* 22,12), and he was elevated to the rank of *princeps iuventutis* ('the first amongst the young') (*HA Vita Commodi* 2,1–2). This procedure had the advantage that the designated successor could be presented to the troops at the Danube.

Already in January, however, – thus before the outbreak of the revolt late in May 175 (Spieß (1975) 63) – Commodus was co-opted onto the priestly colleges (*HA Vita Commodi* 1,10; 12,1). The *cooptatio* had already been addressed on medaillons for Commodus parallel to the emperor's 28th emission (*MIR* (1986) 1065–13),⁹ which also dates before the revolt. It is therefore demonstrable that first emissions had in fact already been issued for the Caesar before the outbreak of the revolt. A coincidence?

If one scrutinizes the emperor's earlier medaillon emissions more closely, it is striking that the 'Germanicus' title was not omitted for Commodus at all, as it was for the emperor in 172. Each year, Marcus had the portrait of his Caesar depicted on the reverse of one of his medaillons, on which the latter kept bearing the victory title and was also identified as the son of Germanicus (*MIR* (1986) 1061–1; 1064–1). In this regard, it cannot really be said that even the emperor gave up the title, which obviously was used to provide some kind of link between father and son for the limited audience of the medaillons' recipients. In addition to these earlier attempts at establishing Commodus as a suitable successor, the emperor's 28th emission (AD 175) shows other conspicuous features which make earlier signs of an impending revolt seem

probable. The actual appearance of the legend CONCOR(dia) EXERC(ituum) calling for the unity of the armies (*MIR* (1986) 293–9) is, above all, a clear indicator for this. The new motif of the *Fides* (trust) (*MIR* (1986) 285–6) also points in this direction, because the goddess is – unusually for her – shown with a standard. Obviously, the situation was already at the beginning of the year so precarious that ‘unifying’ and hope inspiring motifs were spread by way of the coins. It is to be doubted, however, whether the representations of Annona (the produce grown in a year) and of the reclining Tiber (*MIR* (1986) 283–6 and 8; 290–9) can actually be interpreted so broadly as to postulate fears of an Egyptian boycott of grain exports (Priwitz (2008) 197/8) already at this point. From the 29th emission onwards – in time with the start of the revolt – Commodus receives a coinage of his own. One of these new motifs shows the Caesar, for example, toward the left, standing by a *tropaeum* with the legend PRINCIPI IUVENT(uti).¹⁰ The rest of the Caesar’s issues in 175 also show motifs which are, to a great extent, independent of those on the imperial coinage and are, above all, supposed to emphasize the Caesar’s aptitude. The emperor’s motifs carry connotations of victory and announce the end of the revolt. From the following year onwards, in which the *tribunicia potestas*, was bestowed to Commodus, the emperor’s coins and those of his Caesar clearly show closer parallels, which, however, only rarely acquire the dimensions we encounter during the dual principate with Lucius Verus. The following years are now marked by military incidents as well as by the attempts to underline the successor’s aptitude and to emphasize the harmonious cooperation between the emperor and his son. In comparison to Marcus Caesar, Commodus’ status is raised much more towards that of the emperor. This becomes apparent in the Caesar’s coinage, on the one hand, by the adoption of motifs which had been used exclusively for the emperor before – for instance, depictions of *Liberalitas* (e.g. *MIR* (1986) 304–12, 16 and 17) or Jupiter (e.g. *MIR* (1986) 406–14) – and on the other hand, by the use of Minerva. This is remarkable in so far as, in this way, the construction of Marcus’ personal goddess is loosened, and it is used for both of them, often simultaneously, from then on. This may have less to do with the nature of the goddess and much more with the fact that this illustrates the increasingly evident relationship between father and son.

5. Conclusion

In reviewing Marcus Aurelius’ numismatic material, it immediately becomes apparent that the canon of motifs is obviously subject to meticulous planning and a deliberate selection, perfectly tailored to the specific occasion. This is also shown by cross-references between the individual issuers, for example, through

myths, by similarities of pictorial composition, parallel adoptions and omissions of titles, as well as by taking over motifs of the one issuer by the other. These various cross-references obviously document a careful planning; its whole purpose is the clear connection between the members of the imperial family. The number of different issuers in particular – Antoninus Pius, both Faustinas, Lucius Verus, Lucilla, Commodus Caesar and, not least, Marcus himself – provides the unique possibility of revealing internal structures by comparison of the pictorial material. Therefore, the coins are well suited to answering questions for which there is no parallel tradition, as Reinhard Wolters has already remarked (Wolters (1999) 339; *contra* Schindler-Horstkotte (1985) 91–95 and 103). Independent of the question whether any and every allusion could be understood by the audience, the intention behind the allusions is so unambiguous that it lets the frequently asked question of general comprehensibility fade into the background.

NOTES

1. For the definition of medaillons, see: Clay (1976).
2. For the Caesar: Strack (1937) no. 596; Gnecci II (1924) 35 no. 70 pl. 64,2; *LIMC* III (1986) Cacus 2; for the emperor: Strack (1937) no. 541; Gnecci II (1924) 19 no. 90 pl. 53,1; *LIMC* III (1986) Cacus 1 and also Strack (1937) no. 570; Gnecci II (1924) 19 no. 91 pl. 54,3; Dressel (1972/3) 56 no. 26 pl. III 3; *LIMC* V (1990) Herakles Pinarii/Potitii 3503.
3. Whether Marcus already uses the *princeps iuventutis*-title at this point in time, has as yet not been clarified unambiguously. In any case, the title was never minted on coins for him, quite in contrast to Domitian and also to Commodus. Cf. e.g. Cassius Dio 79,17,1 and *RIC* III 600–603, 615–17 as well as 1518–22.
4. For Marcus Caesar, Minerva is depicted on a sphinx, which both stand for strength and wisdom (Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromateis* V 7,42,3); Strack (1937) 336, Appendix II D 1 pl. IV; Toynbee (1944) 141 with n. 143 pl. XXIV 7. For Antoninus Pius, Jupiter is shown as a boy riding on the goat Amaltheia: Strack (1937) no. 658a; Toynbee (1944) 142 n. 155 pl. 25,2. For Faustina the Younger, Diana is shown with a torch and a *patera* (?), riding on a stag: Strack (1937) no. 734; Gnecci II (1924) 40 no. 16 pl. 68,4 (by Strack erroneously 68,7), whereas the medaillon for the emperor's deceased wife, the *Diva* Faustina the Elder, is decorated with the mother goddess Cybele riding on a lion: Strack (1937) no. 707; Gnecci III (1924) 31 no. 34 pl. 150,2.
5. By the dating elements TR POT XV and COS II DESIG III in the obverse legend, the Caesar's coinage concerned is to be dated within a few days precisely from December 10 to 31, 160. Cf. Strack (1937) no. 377; *RIC* III 487. The same motifs on the imperial coinage have only TRP XXIII as dating element, and are therefore to be dated to the entire year 160: Strack (1937) nos. 365 and 658, 1192; *RIC* III 302, 1031, 1035; Gnecci II (1924) 13 no. 35 pl. 46,7.

6. Regarding the arrangements of issue, see the treatise by Wolfgang Szaivert.
7. *MIR* (1986) 1078–11 – but with an incorrect reference there: ‘Sonstige 24’, instead of ‘Augustus 72’ and there also falsely: 1080, instead of 1078; Gneecchi II (1924) 72 nos. 2 and 3 pl. 91,8–9; Weiß (2008) 23.
8. Cf. Scheidel (1990) 11pp. and Wolters (1999) 330/1 with n. 323.
9. The motif strongly resembles the depiction of sacrificial implements, which at that time had been minted for Marcus Caesar: Strack (1937) no. 122. On Marcus’ coins, a pitcher appears in addition, which is now missing on the coins of Commodus Caesar; moreover, the inscription PONTIF has been added to his motif, that of Marcus Caesar bore the inscription PIETAS AUG, which can be found on Commodus’ coins too, but only in the 30th emission.
10. *MIR* (1986) 308–14; 309–12, 14, 16, and 17. This is in so far especially remarkable as the *princeps iuventutis*-title had not been communicated on coins since Domitian (e.g. *RIC* II 43, 51, 233, 244, and 246). On Marcus Caesar’s numismatic material it is also not to be found.

FURTHER READING

For the coins of Marcus Caesar between 140 and 161, see Strack (1937), for his reign from AD 161 on, see Szaivert (1986). With regard to various peculiarities of the course of the issue and to first interpretations, see Wolters (1999) 320–39. With reference to the numismatic evidence for the wars in the North, see Schindler-Horstkotte (1985) and Scheidel (1990). An exhaustive evaluation of Marcus’ Aurelius’ numismatic material, entitled *Marc Aurel im Spiegel seiner Münzen und Medaillons. Eine vergleichende Analyse der stadtrömischen Prägungen zwischen 138 und 180 n. Chr.* (2012), has been published by the author.

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CHAPTER 18

The Portraits

A Short Introduction

Dietrich Boschung

Portraits of Roman emperors did not provide a haphazard ‘snapshot’. They are, on the contrary, elaborately designed and consistently used instruments in the emperor’s policy of self-presentation. Their aim was to make the image of the emperor omnipresent – in public and throughout the Empire – in accordance with his own self-conception and with the objective of a favorable perception. Being a powerful medium, the portrait was able to convey standards and values, which the emperor felt constrained to follow, since they tied his relationship to the Senate and the population of Rome and the whole Empire as well as to the Roman military.

The tradition of Roman imperial portraiture had already been implemented during the early reign of Augustus and developed from there on, influencing the whole subsequent imperial imagery; hence, at the time of Marcus Aurelius, the norm of imperial portraiture was well established. During the Republican period, the practice of the Hellenistic cities, i.e. erecting statues to honor rulers and benefactor citizens, was adopted at Rome. Within the strains and struggles of power during the late Republican period, the portrait statues of political leaders became a specific instrument of agitation. The extant portraits of ambitious politicians such as Pompey, Crassus, Caesar, and Cicero exhibit the intentional employment of characteristic iconographical elements and formal conceptions rooted in Hellenistic arts. The portraits of these persons create a distinctive identity as they depict individual particularities and attempt at gaining the population’s favor. In order to sharply stress the self and the particularity of the depicted person, the portrait’s design notably differentiates from the others (Walker (1995) 61–85; Vorster (2007) 286–94).

Arguably, Octavian was the first, during the civil wars after Caesar’s assassination, to choose the systematic dissemination of his imagery as means of his

own political publicity (Boschung (1993); Rose (1997) 58–60; Boschung (2002) 181–82), based mainly on two complementary elements. Firstly, the centrally created official models or prototypes with well-defined features such as the turn of the head, the hairstyle, and facial features were made available to artists and minters. The life-size portraits – mainly sculptured in the round – could be combined with every statue of any stature as well as with busts. Yet, the models were also followed by small-scale portraits (Dahmen (2001)). The prototypes had to be centrally designed within the immediate imperial circles and officially sanctioned by the emperor himself or the court, which at least allowed the commissioning of the imperial portraits within a controlled system (Stemmer (1988) 69–71; Fejfer (2008) 407–19). The emperor himself ascertained the moment of creation, the artist, and the appearance of a new portrait model. By this means, influence was exerted on the public appearance of the emperor. Secondly, the widely spread dissemination of the official models succeeded due to different ways and means (Fejfer (2008) 419–25; Albertson (2004) 291–99). The minters as well as the sculptors within Octavian's domain transformed the models – to a greater or lesser extent – into two-dimensional portraits or material in marble or bronze. The technique of manufacturing the official portrait was already developed by sculptors during the Hellenistic period. They used a form of the pointing process, which has also enabled the reproduction of the *opera nobilia* of the fifth century BC (Pfanner (1989) 176–204). In the case of Octavian a great number of engraved gems, which additionally depicted the portrait of the triumvir, were used by his party supporters, facilitating the distribution of the imagery (Gagetti (2001) 134–39, 143–44 nos. 1–31; Sena Chiesa (2002)). These gems notably emphasize the significance of the imperial portrait when it came to advertising legitimacy. After the civil war and the confirmation by the Senate which awarded Octavian the unique title of Augustus, a new portrait-model should denote his prominent position (Boschung (1993) 38–65). This newly created portrait was valid and in use during the reign of Augustus and even beyond his death. Even the portraits of the emperor's relatives, e.g. Livia or the adopted sons Gaius, Lucius, and Tiberius, were treated and disseminated in the same manner (Rose (1997) 60–72; Boschung (2002) 182–92). The dominant position of the emperor within Roman society favored the omnipresence of his portraits by means of numerous honorific statues displayed in public space. The dedication and erection of imperial portrait statues can – in particular – be considered an evident symbol for political allegiance: It is presumed by Michael Pfanner that the number of Augustus' statues displayed in the cities of the Empire can be estimated between 25 000 and 50 000 (Pfanner (1989) 178). The imperial portraits, in addition, had further impact on private portraiture, which reflected their hairstyle and facial expressions (Bergmann (1982) 143–47; Fejfer (2008) 270–79).

The successors of Octavian maintained his established system of creation and dissemination of imperial portraits without any obvious modifications; it was also not affected by political crises during dynastic changes (see Albertson (2004) 291–99). Several practices were used to convey ideological and political messages. The portraits associated the emperor with or dissociated him from the predecessor or former emperors by taking up or contrasting the respective portrait conception. Even imperial statues of different date, displayed on sites nearby in a city, e.g. on the Forum, within the Basilicae and theaters, evidently revealed such references (Rose (1997); Boschung (2002); Deppmeyer (2008)). From the viewpoint of the second century, portraits of the Julio-Claudians as well as of the Flavians showed the family union through similarities and thus visualized the subsequent dynasties (Boschung (2002) 197–98).

Hadrian was the first emperor who discarded the early conception of the imperial portrait after his accession; his new portrait conception differed not only from the image of his predecessor Trajan, but also from the portraits of former emperors (Fittschen and Zanker (1985) 44–58 nos. 46–54; Evers (1994)). This is even more striking as the rule of Hadrian was legitimized through his adoption by Trajan who, in turn, had been adopted by Nerva. Unlike the emperors of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, Hadrian did not try to exhibit the extremely important dynastic cohesion in his own portrait conception, the dimension of which could only be realized by the beholder through the related inscriptions. Two distinctive elements marked the portrait conception of Hadrian as distinguished from that of his predecessors: the beard (Vout (2003) 446–57) and the bulky hair with the long waved tresses brushed forward from the crown. Though bearded princes and emperors of the first century AD are evidenced, the beard is often connected with young adults of the imperial family or it had been worn as a sign of mourning and in the military context. However, the beard did not belong to the model of what a Roman emperor looked like and was exceptionally depicted by some artists in response to severe political situations (Bergmann (1982) 144–45; Cain (1993) 100–104). In contrast, bearded portraits of private individuals were regularly depicted since the early imperial period and even more often during the reign of Trajan. It is likely that a few effigies of bearded men embodying meritorious politicians were displayed during the Roman Republic at Rome, as evidenced by the so-called ‘Brutus’ bronze head (Schwarzmaier (2010); Parisi Presicce (1999)). However, one may reasonably also expect a reference to the bearded heads of Greek poets and philosophers (Vout (2003) 446–53; Zanker (1995) 206–22). The majority of these portraits show men with long and full beards, but also close-cropped versions of the beard are evidenced as the portrait of Aristotle demonstrates (Voutiras (2001)). Thus, the beard leaves room for different interpretations and the questions as to why Hadrian adopted this conception and where it comes from remain unsolved. However, there is no

doubt that the new portrait conception of Hadrian constituted a radical departure from the former conception of imperial portraits with an immediate and sustainable effect on private portraits of men. (Zanker (1995) 211–19). Unlike the beard, Hadrian's coiffure with its wavy hair was inspired by Nero's and Domitian's *coma in gradus formata* arrangement as it is evidenced by the literary sources and a few extant portraits (Cain (1993) 58–68). As these emperors were declared *hostis* and officially received a *damnatio memoria* from the Senate (Varner (2004)) it is very unlikely that Hadrian's portrait conception had any programmatic relation to them, which is also clearly revealed by Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars* dated from Hadrianic time. The public images of Nero and Domitian were completely removed after their decease (Varner (2004) 46–85, 111–35), which prevented a visual relation between the newly created portrait of Hadrian and his problematic predecessors.

Beside these distinctive innovations, the new imperial portrait also comprises other – less unobtrusive – changes, which had the same potency, though. The eyebrows, for instance, were not modeled as the sharp lines any more that could generally be evidenced by early imperial portraits and by images of Trajan, but as plastically individual forms with engraved hairs. Another technical innovation was the drilling of eyes, which became normal practice starting with the reign of Hadrian. In addition, a new sensibility for physiognomic particularities and effects, which were almost displaced by the classicizing approach to representation of the first century AD, could be observed. According to this, the images of Hadrian exhibit individually shaped eyelids as well as diagonal earlobe creases only evidenced by his portraits.

Though it was a radical departure from the early imperial portraiture, the portrait conception of Hadrian manifested a new tradition that persisted almost a century (see Kreilinger (2003) 91–125; Fless et al. (2006) 131–40). This can certainly be associated with the stable political situation during the second century AD. At the latest by the succession arrangement of the year 138, the portrait conception for the adopted son Antoninus Pius had been created with a strong reference to the former emperor Hadrian in order to highlight the family and political cohesion (Fittschen and Zanker (1985) 63–66 no. 59). Like the images of his adoptive father, the portrait of Antoninus Pius is also characterized by a close-cropped beard and irregularly thick curls of hair above the forehead. Though a second portrait type of Antoninus Pius had been developed – most probably in context of his accession – the first portrait conception remained the only officially sanctioned one throughout his reign. That is particularly striking because the emperors of the first century AD generally only referred to the former emperor with the first official portrait type, but soon replaced it with newly created ones (Boschung (2002) 190). Such a blatant disassociation from the portraiture of the predecessor had been there neither during the long reign of Antoninus Pius nor during that of

Marcus Aurelius. The adoption of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus by Antoninus Pius forms an important part of Hadrian's succession arrangement in AD 138, which thus had secured the succession for two generations. Official portraits were designed for both Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (Fittschen (1999) 13–21, 32–38). The creation of the Antonine dynasty is celebrated by the famous relief panels belonging to a monument found at Ephesus, which depicts the imperial family in *concordia* and, at the same time, in a hierarchically structured way. The unity of three generations tending to reign over the Roman Empire is illustrated not only by composition, drapery, and gestures, but also by the similarity of the portraits (Fejfer (2008) 270–72). The portraits depicted on these relief panels stress the resemblance between the persons and thus emphasize their strong solidarity. They also demonstrate the different ages: while Antoninus Pius is portrayed as a mature, bearded man with engraved furrows on the forehead, Marcus Aurelius is presented as a young adult with smooth cheeks and Lucius Verus as a child with a chubby face who is nestled to his adoptive father (Fuchs (2006) 88–89, and (2009) 347–48).

The first portrait type of Marcus Aurelius (Figure 18.1) shows the prince as a young man with thick curls and a beardless face (Stemmer (1988) 14–17;

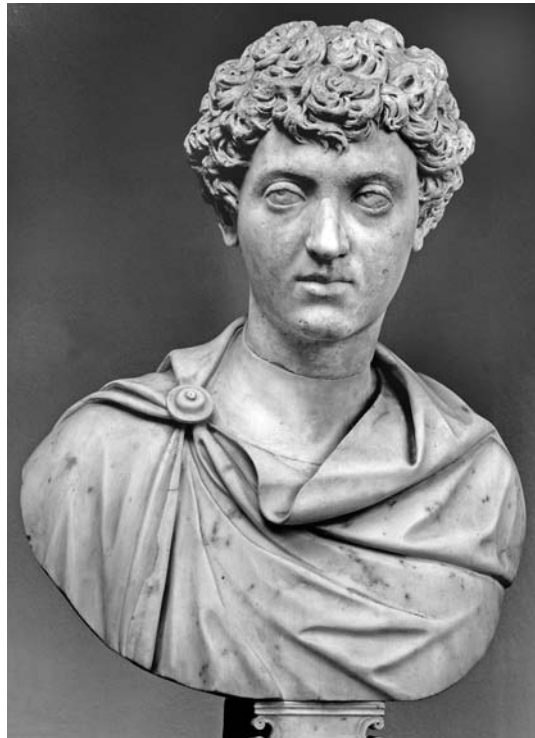


Figure 18.1 Portrait head in Holkham Hall (Fittschen, Antonin. Prinzen 13 A4). <http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/marbilder/425484>.

Bergmann (1978) 22, 40; Fittschen (1999) 13–21). Regarding the hairstyle, the portrait type corresponds to the one of his adoptive father, with the difference that the hair falls over the forehead. The youth of the prince who is supposed to reign the generation after next is indicated by arching eyebrows and a mouth with full lips. This depiction allows an association of Marcus Aurelius with his adoptive father Antoninus Pius at a young age; his future co-regent the younger Lucius Verus, on the other hand, is depicted as a child (Fittschen (1999) 32–38). The portraits are accurately matched in such a way that they convey the continuity and stability of a political system throughout the generations.

A second portrait type of Marcus Aurelius (Figure 18.2) was conceived most probably soon after the death of Hadrian (Bergmann (1978) 22–23, 40–41; Fittschen (1999) 22–31). It also shows the youthful prince, but – on the majority of the extant portraits – with a moustache and a downy beard, covering the cheeks and the point of the chin only. The thick curling hairstyle is arranged as a fringe across the brow. It is traditionally believed that the second portrait type of Marcus Aurelius has been created to represent him as the appointed successor of the reigning emperor in answer to his altered position after the decease of Hadrian. The new image was required, in order to convey confidence to the population of the Roman Empire, by showing that the emperor had found a



Figure 18.2 Farnborough Hall (Fittschen 24 B 16). <http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/marbilder/3317700>.

young, but grown-up son and thus a successor. Despite some artistic alterations regarding the length and density of the beard, the second portrait type of Marcus Aurelius was employed during the whole reign of Antoninus Pius.

Only after the death of Antoninus Pius and the accession to power by Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus a new portrait type had been created, while the second type of Marcus' portraits which showed him gradually developing from a young man into an adult continued to be used (Bergmann (1978) 23–26, 41; Fittschen and Zanker (1985) 70–74 nos. 65–67). The most characteristic feature of the third portrait type is the long and full beard growing further than the chin (see Figure 18.3). The eyebrows above heavy upper eyelids are consistently arched as also evidenced by the youth portraits. Even the

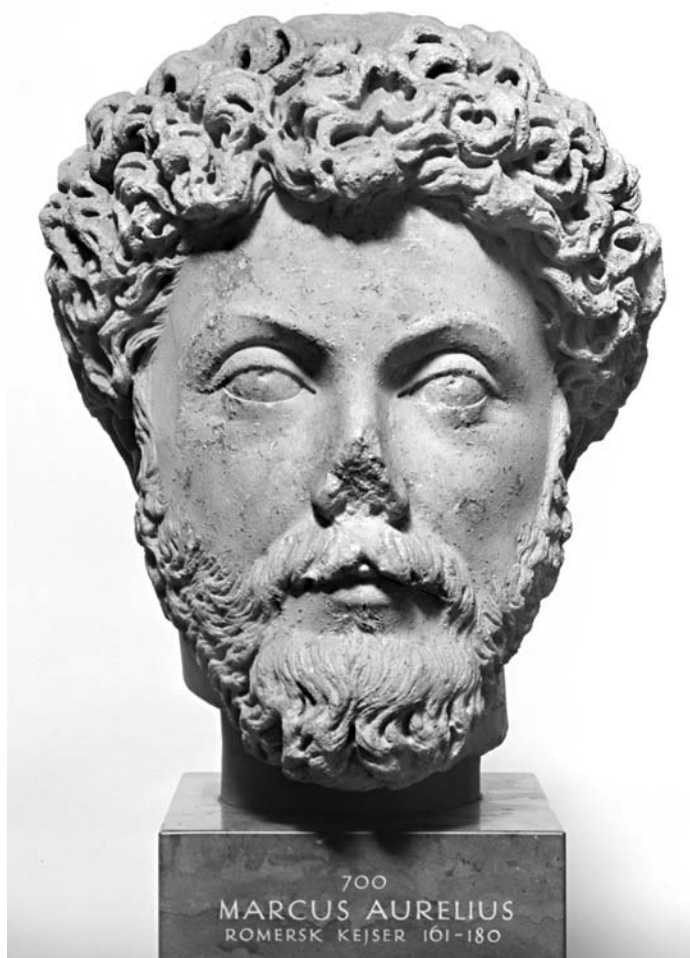


Figure 18.3 Copenhagen NCG Cat. 700 (Poulsen II no. 81). <http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/marbilder/2015629>.

arrangement of curls on the forehead is the same as on the earlier portrait types. The emperor's age is also revealed on the third portrait type: it depicts a mature and experienced image of Marcus Aurelius. A glance at the contemporaneous portraits of his co-regent Lucius Verus demonstrates the similarity between the portrait conception, but with deviations like the loosely arranged curls that fall onto the forehead and the trimmed whiskers that bring out the contrast between the smooth chin and the full chin-beard. Compared to this artificial illustration, the beard of Marcus Aurelius seems to grow more naturally though it is also trimmed. In this manner, his beard refers to the portraits of Greek philosophers more than was the case for his predecessors (Zanker (1995) 212). This reference is intensified with the fourth and final portrait type of Marcus Aurelius (Figure 18.4), the creation of which can be dated after AD 166 or probably after the death of Lucius Verus in AD 169 (Bergmann (1978) 25–27, 41–42; Fittschen and Zanker (1985) 74–78 nos. 68–71; Albertson (2004) 259–306). Portraits belonging to this type differ from the former one, due to the longer, thicker beard, which is parted into two long strands below the chin. Another deviant feature is the hairstyle with the upswept curls above the forehead that indicates a well-arranged pattern unlike the former portraits.



Figure 18.4 Rome, Palazzo Braschi (Fittschen/Zanker I no. 68). <http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/marbilder/838240>.

Not only portrait heads, but also statues of Marcus Aurelius referred to the models of former emperors. Different statue types are evidenced, such as standing statues wearing the toga and the armored costume, equestrian or seated statues depicting the emperor either with a toga or in the guise of a deity with naked body and chlamys draped around the waist (Bergmann (1978) 19–21). These varieties and modes of sculptural representation had already been produced and used from the time of Augustus on and also continued to be relevant during the second century AD. While the cuirassed portrait points out the role of the emperor as a military leader, the toga epitomizes the virtues and their exemplary adherence, which he shares with the population of the Roman Empire. The representation of statuary types based on the iconography of deities had also been used since the early imperial period to demonstrate the emperor's superior status.

In some of the most prominent locations of Rome, the Rostra as the speakers' platform on the Roman Forum, an over life-size seated statue of Marcus Aurelius was displayed representing the emperor with the toga. Furthermore, on the opposite side of the Rostra a corresponding statue of Hadrian was displayed, holding a globe in the right and a long scepter in the left hand (L'Orange (1939) 82–83 pl. 14, 15, 21a–b). The representation of both statues is evidenced on a relief panel depicting the Rostra scene with an *adlocutio* (addressing the crowd) on the Arch of Constantine, erected shortly after AD 312. Beside Constantine, the portrait statues of Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius are the only frontal figures, which surpassed the others by far (Stewart (2003) 115 fig. 23).

Given the historical context of the year AD 312, after taking possession of Rome during the civil war against Maxentius, the statue of Marcus Aurelius must be regarded as an appeal to prudence and responsibility.

The equestrian statue on the *Campidoglio* (Capitoline Hill) became the most famous one of the emperor Marcus Aurelius as well as of antiquity at all because it was revered as a statue of Constantine (Melucco Vaccaro and Mura Sommella (1989); Gramaccini (1996) 145–58). It pertains to the rare bronze statues of antiquity, which have been preserved and escaped being melted down, unlike most similar statues. At least since medieval times, the equestrian statue was placed in front of the palace and church of St. John Lateran, constituting a subject of admiration but also of controversial interpretations. It had already been correctly identified as Marcus Aurelius by the humanists of the Renaissance.

The portraits of Marcus Aurelius appear unobtrusive in the context of Roman imperial portraiture: the portrait types and conceptions of his two predecessors were taken up and consequently developed. Therefore, they convey the image of a ruler who inherited his grandfather's and father's tasks, which he carried out insistently and painstakingly, remaining true to

himself. The portraits lack certain fashionable extravagances, as indicated by the portraits of his co-regent Lucius Verus. The consolidation of the imperial family from generation to generation was commonly featured by statue groups, as is evidenced by the portraits displayed in the exedra of Herodes Atticus at Olympia (Bol (1984)).

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CHAPTER 19

The Reliefs

Representation of Marcus Aurelius' Deeds

Dietrich Boschung

Besides the portrait statues erected in public space, the large-scale reliefs of Marcus Aurelius constitute a further medium to convey the official perception of his deeds. In this chapter, I will mainly focus on two large series of reliefs, which shed light on these aspects in particular: the depictions on the column and panel reliefs belonging to an arch of Marcus Aurelius. Arches, as well as columns, are official monuments commissioned by the Roman Senate that have been approved by the emperor. The conception of both subject and style was agreed between Senate and the imperial family and thus appropriated by them.

The Aurelian Column set up at the Piazza Colonna in Rome (Maffei (1993)), includes reliefs commemorating the battles against the barbarian tribes of the Danube and reveals the most striking and detailed documentation of Marcus Aurelius' deeds (Caprino (1955)). Though the relief scenes depict historical events which took place contemporaneously with the writing of his *Meditations*, they do not refer to his philosophical observations.

According to the general scholarly consensus, the scenes on the Aurelian column refer to occurrences that happened between the years AD 172 and 175; the set-up and thus the dating of the monument itself, however, remain unclear due to the lack of a building inscription. It can be assumed that the column was planned from AD 176, but finished and dedicated only after his death in AD 180 (Coarelli (2008) 32–37). Of a total of 116 scenes, the figure of Marcus Aurelius appears 59 times, i.e. in every second scene. The emperor appears for the first time in scene III, the scene which also marks the beginning of the military campaign; it shows Marcus Aurelius together with the Roman troops, crossing the Danube over a well-built pontoon bridge (Petersen et al. (1896) pl. 9–11; Coarelli (2008) 114–18). From the beginning he is characterized as the leader of the Roman troops, showing them the right direction. He is accompanied by

two persons, a constellation repeated in several scenes. These two figures are not philosophers, but officers advising the emperor and thus preparing him for military decisions. On the Column of Trajan, erected three generations before the emperor, Trajan is regularly depicted accompanied by his officers. Thus, it is hardly surprising that Marcus Aurelius pursues such an established convention in regard to decision-making, which has been proven during former military campaigns. In the following scenes on the Aurelian Column, the emperor consistently addresses the troops, e.g. at the proclamation at the end of the first campaign (Petersen et al. (1896) pl. 63; Coarelli (2008) 222–24) (see Figure 19.1). The soldiers in front of the emperor are represented, holding the *vexilla* (military flags) with the effigy of Marcus Aurelius on them, which demonstrates their allegiance to him. The scenes display a variety of events, such as barbarians negotiating with or submitting to the emperor; he is depicted checking the advance of the troops, leading the battles, controlling the transport of the spoils of war and the prisoners, concluding agreements, and sacrificing.

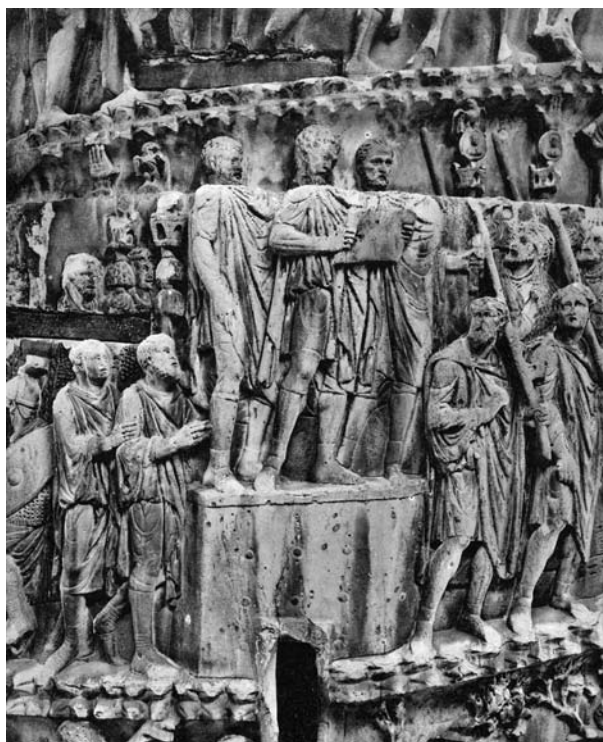


Figure 19.1 Column of Marcus Aurelius, scene LV. E. Petersen, A. von Domaszewski, and G. Calderini (1896), *Die Marcus-Säule auf Piazza Colonna in Rom*. Munich.

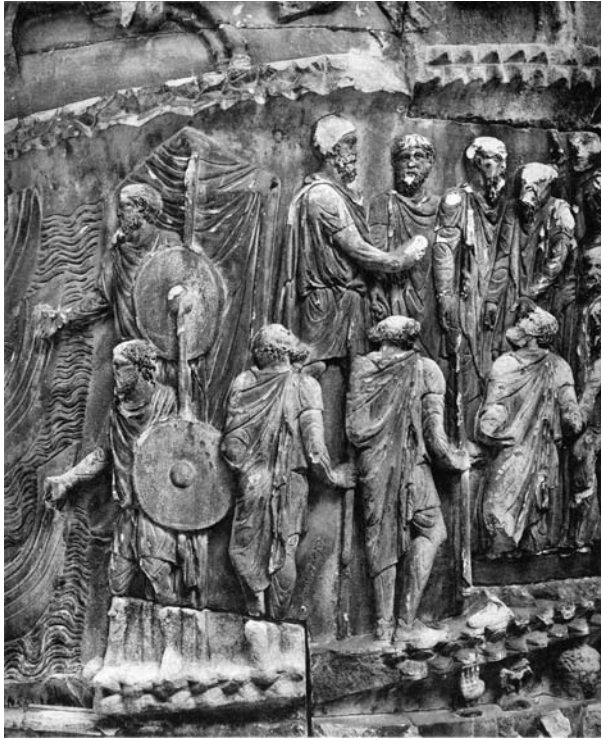


Figure 19.2 Column of Marcus Aurelius, scene LX–LXI. E. Petersen, A. von Domaszewski, and G. Calderini (1896), *Die Marcus-Säule auf Piazza Colonna in Rom*. Munich.

Marcus Aurelius, as a conscientious military leader, is depicted in scene LXVI that refers to the second military campaign (Petersen et al. (1896) pl. 75; Coarelli (2008) 247). In this scene the victorious emperor – again in company with his officers – is shown seated on a *cella castrensis* (tall seat), being presented the severed heads of barbarians by two of his soldiers. Their bravery as a personal contribution led to victory, which was lauded and awarded by the emperor. The same scene also shows two captive barbarians who are presented by soldiers and will most probably be condemned and executed (see Figure 19.2). If required, the emperor could also pronounce strong judgments as shown in a section of the following scene. After Marcus Aurelius' judgment on three captive barbarians, the next scene shows the beheading of a captive and the abduction of women (Petersen et al. (1896) pl. 68–70; Coarelli (2008) 233–37). All these scenes reveal that the emperor himself leads the different phases of the battles and pays attention to essential concerns in a meticulous and tireless way.

It has always been noted that the Aurelian Column was obviously closely modeled on the Column of Trajan in its overall form and design (Jordan-Ruwe

(1995) 84; Martines (2000) 19–88; Hölscher (2000) 89–96). First of all, both columns are of the same height (100 Roman feet), contain an internal spiral staircase, which is lit by small windows and leads to the capital. Both columns are also similar, due to the use of a sculpted helical frieze depicting the course of battles in numerous scenes. The military campaign starts with the Roman troops crossing the bridge – a scene shown at the bottom of both columns. Furthermore, the conformity between the two columns can be observed in the composition of the reliefs, in the structural design of important scenes, and sometimes also in the depiction of details. Thus, the first and most important message of the Aurelian Column is that Marcus Aurelius is a competent, resolute, and triumphant commander as was his predecessor Trajan. The wars and battles are again of great importance for the Roman Empire, such as the Dacian wars, and, finally, Marcus Aurelius prevails just as Trajan did (Hölscher (2000) 89). Thus, the deviations and differences from the Column of Trajan are all the more important. They mainly concern formal elements of the reliefs, such as the enhanced visibility of the figures and the improved readability of the scenes due to fewer spirals. In this way the size of the figures increases and they are more clearly arranged. Finally, also the windows of the staircase inside are better, corresponding to the scenes. As far as the style is concerned, the reliefs abandon the Classic tendency insofar as they are much more emotional and expressive as well as clearly designed due to the play of light and shadow (Pirson (1996) 168–71). The subject matter has changed, too. The emphasis on construction that one finds on the Column of Trajan is gone. Now, scenes of violent battles and wartime cruelties prevail. The brutality of the war against the submissive barbarians becomes apparent quite precisely because of the better readability of the scenes. The degree of cruelty depicted in the execution scenes does not find a correspondence on the Column of Trajan (Pirson (1996) 139–79).

The military campaigns of Marcus Aurelius are also the subject of the 11 relief panels that were part of a triumphal arch; eight of them were re-used on the attic of the arch of Constantine at Rome, while the other three reliefs – once preserved in the church of St. Martina – were moved to the Campidoglio in the 16th century. The relief panels constitute a series that most likely belongs to an arch dedicated to Marcus Aurelius, the location and the form of which are quite uncertain. Although the arrangement of the relief panels remains unknown, the chronological sequence of the documented events is clear (Ryberg (1967); Koeppel (1986); Angelicoussis (1984); De Maria (1988) 303–305; Torelli (1993) 98–99). The series begins with Marcus Aurelius' departure from Rome for a campaign (Ryberg (1967) 28–37 figs. 18, 24–26; Koeppel (1986) 56–58 fig. 31; Angelicoussis (1984) 145 pl. 62,1) (see Figure 19.3). The Via Flaminia is visible due to the arch in the background with a quadriga pulled by elephants. The arch erected across the Via Flaminia



Figure 19.3 Relief panel, profectio of Marcus Aurelius. No. Anderson 2534, representation of a Roman relief panel with the depiction of Marcus Aurelius, the so-called profectio relief, Arch of Constantine, Rome. Alinari Archives, Florence.

denotes the line of the *pomerium*, the sacred and augural boundary marking the borders of the city Rome. His departure is observed by the Genius Senatus and the Genius Populi Romani who are standing behind him and also behind the line of the *pomerium*. Soldiers outside this line are already waiting with their *vexilla* and the horse of the emperor. Subsequent to this one, other events follow in unclear order, for instance the emperor addressing the troops, the *adlocutio* (Ryberg (1967) 50–56 figs. 37–38; Koeppel (1986) 58–60 fig. 32; Angelicoussis (1984) 146 pl. 63,1). As is shown on the column, here a companion and the soldiers holding the *vexilla* high appear behind the emperor as well.

Another relief panel depicts the emperor sacrificing at an altar and wearing the *toga*, the civic costume of the Roman period (Ryberg (1967) 37–43 figs. 27, 29–31; Koeppel (1986) 66–70 fig. 36; Angelicoussis (1984) 146 pl. 62,2). The presence of an adolescent *camillus*, an assistant, carrying the small incense box, the *acerra*, and of a *tibicen*, the musician, playing the flute, indicates that the sacrifice is performed within the prescribed ritual. They are flanked by a group of soldiers with *vexilla* in front of which two musicians

are playing the tuba. The relief also shows other assistants leading sacrificial animals like a pig, a ram, and a bull, to the altar. A similar scene with the same subject matter can also be found on the Column of Trajan and makes clear that the procession of the soldiers takes place around the campsite. The sacrifice here concerns a *lustratio exercitus*, a ritual sacrifice of purification of the army, executed by the emperor according to his responsibilities.

It is hardly surprising that the dutiful emperor evokes the subjugation of the barbarians as is evidenced by another relief panel showing a pair of captives kneeling in front of the riding emperor with outstretched arms, appealing for clemency (Ryberg (1967) 147–48 pl. 2,3; Koeppel (1986) 47–50 fig. 27; Angelicoussis (1984) 147–48 pl. 63,3). Other less understanding barbarians are captured and presented to the emperor with bound arms (Ryberg (1967) 56–66 figs. 40–42; Koeppel (1986) 60–65 figs. 33–34; Angelicoussis (1984) 148–49 pl. 64,1–2). A further relief panel shows the inauguration of a barbarian leader to the Roman soldiers. Standing in front of a podium, this leader gets a diadem from the emperor and thus the royal dignity. The ceremony takes place in front of a monumental campsite-gate constructed of massive ashlar blocks of detailed rendering. The *simulacra* carrying images of the deities Victoria and Mars as well as the *vexilla* of the Roman troops are set up in front of the gate and clearly illustrate how the victory and this political success have been gained.

The sequence of the six relief panels mentioned before remains unclear. The *adlocutio* and the *lustratio* are typical scenes for events of a war and thus they can be used at any position. In contrast, the panel showing the installation of the vassal should constitute the end of such a series. However, further stages of the events can be more clearly identified, such as the return of the emperor clothed in traveling dress and in company of Mars and Virtus (might also be Honos and Virtus) after the successful conclusion of the campaign (Ryberg (1967) 66–71 figs. 19–20; Koeppel (1986) 70–72 fig. 38; Angelicoussis (1984) 151 pl. 66,1). An arch and a temple can be seen in the background and the latter can be identified as the sanctuary of Fortuna Redux, which was located close to the Porta Triumphalis due to the depictions on the pediment (cornucopia, wheel, and a globe). The goddess herself is shown on the left side of the background, behind the emperor and in front of her own temple in order to accompany him. Next to her the personification of *Felicitas* is presented holding a cornucopia and a *caduceus*, a herald's staff, which indicate prosperity caused by the return of the emperor. He is designated as the triumphant emperor by a winged Victoria, the goddess of victory, depicted above his head bearing garlands meant for the decoration of the monuments. The emperor Marcus Aurelius returning home in triumph is represented on another relief panel (Ryberg (1967) 15–20 figs. 9–13, 15; Koeppel (1986) 50–52 fig. 28; Angelicoussis (1984) 152–54 pl. 66,2). There, he is shown riding in a richly



Figure 19.4 Relief panel, triumph of Marcus Aurelius. <http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/item/marbilder/231625>.

decorated chariot pulled by four horses, passing a monumental temple and an archway, embodying the urban context of Rome (see Figure 19.4). A Victory is also hovering over the head of the emperor. In front of the chariot a musician and a *lictor* (a Roman functionary who is attending magistrates) are leading the triumphal procession. The chariot is adorned with images of Neptune, Roma herself, and Minerva as well as two goddesses of victory holding a shield. The conspicuous gap to the emperor's left indicates the presence of a second person, originally accompanying him: it was Commodus, Marcus Aurelius' son, who was completely chiseled away after his fall and his condemnation, i.e. the so-called *damnatio memoriae*. Thus the relief refers to the triumph – jointly

celebrated by Marcus Aurelius and Commodus on December 23, 176 – of their victories over the Germans and Sarmatians mentioned by the *Historia Augusta*. As far as the Roman triumph is concerned, it must be emphasized that it is a ritual concerning a variety of long-lasting celebrations with a great number of participants and the presentations of spoils, captives, and attractions such as statues or paintings (Östenberg (2009); Beard (2007)). The depiction on the relief panel, however, concentrates on a certain aspect: the triumphant emperor riding in a chariot as the protagonist of the long procession.

The triumphal procession ends on the Capitoline Hill in front of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, where the triumphant emperor performs a sacrifice (Ryberg (1967) 21–27 figs. 14, 16, 17; Koeppel (1986) 52–56 figs. 29, 30; Angelicoussis (1984) 154 pl. 67,1). Like on the *lustratio* panel, the emperor – dressed with the toga and *capite velato* (with covered head), sacrifices with the help of a *camillus* who holds the incense box and with musical accompaniment. The sacrificial bull appears in the background, attended by the *Victimarius*. Apart from Marcus Aurelius, the *flamen Dialis*, the priest of the Jupiter cult, the Genius Senatus, as well as the Genius Populi Romani are present. The location of the sacrifice is clearly identifiable: it takes place in front of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which can be identified by the three doors leading to the three *cellas* of the Capitoline Triad, i.e. Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. They are also visible in the middle of the pediment surrounded by numerous figures. The last relief panel (Ryberg (1967) 71–76 figs. 49–52; Koeppel (1986) 72–74 fig. 39; Angelicoussis (1984) 154–58 pl. 67,2) depicts a scene of a *congiarium* (distributing largesse) with Marcus Aurelius sitting on a *sella curulis* (magistrate's chair) placed on a monumental podium. He is in company of three male *togati* and of an assistant who distributes the money according to the emperor's instructions to men, women, and children. The figures embodying the Roman people are standing in front of the podium. A figure, originally sitting beside the emperor on a *sella curulis* as well and thus sharing the same high position, has been removed at a later date. It must be none other than Commodus with whom Marcus Aurelius gave the *congiarium* of 177. Therefore, the depictions on this relief panel constitute the completion of the events.

Both the series of relief panels and the scenes on the Aurelian Column deal with the same subject matter, but with different gravitas. Whereas the depictions of elaborate details on the column are mainly restricted to the events during the military campaigns, the relief panels underscore the relation with the city of Rome. After the departure from Rome, the emperor returns home, having completed the war. There, he celebrates his triumph and offers a sacrifice to Jupiter. Finally, he issues a *congiarium* to the Roman population. All of these depictions recount specific historical events that took place in Rome and are clearly identifiable. Unlike the scenes on the column, the relief panels

stress the close relation between Marcus Aurelius and the Senate, whose personification is depicted close to him on both the profectio and sacrifice panel. Furthermore, he also has a good and balanced relationship with the Roman priesthods, the population, and even with the deities. The dynastic aspects are conveyed by at least two relief panels through the presence of Commodus accompanying his father. Except for a few standardized situations, concrete military events are disregarded on the relief panels. As they depict fewer persons in comparison to the scenes on the Aurelian column, the figure of the emperor is highlighted. The subject matter of the depictions on both the column and the relief panels shows the exemplary life and the responsible attitude of the emperor at home as well as during the war – *domi et militiae*. He demonstrates the common values of the imperial ideology – once provided and established under the reign of Augustus – which do not emanate from his philosophical views. Values such as *virtus* (virtue) and *pietas* (devotion) are demonstrated by the right attitude to war and strict obedience to religious rules and rituals during sacrifice. By treating conquered people fairly, the emperor exemplifies *iustitia* and *clementia* (justice and mercy). Whatever the emperor does, it is done after a thorough consultation and also in accordance with the Senate and the Roman population. A system using these principles was not related to one person only, as is evidenced by the re-use of the relief panels on the Arch of Constantine at the beginning of the fourth century in order to represent him as the ideal emperor.

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PART V

MARCUS THE PHILOSOPHER

CHAPTER 20

The Form and Structure of the *Meditations*

*Jean-Baptiste Gourinat**

Whether or not the so-called *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius have any structure at all is a disputed question. This is a book of 113 pages in the Teubner edition, divided into 12 books, themselves composed of chapters of unequal length, ranging from one line to 40 lines for the rare long chapters. With a word-count amounting to 29 724, it is but a third of a book such as Plato's *Republic*.

At first sight, once one has passed the first book, consisting of a list of 16 people Marcus expresses his gratitude to, detailing what he owes each of them, with the addition of a chapter explaining what Marcus owes to the gods, it is difficult to see any order in the succession of the books and chapters. And it is all the more difficult to see any deliberate order if one knows that the division into books and chapters does not go back to our single ancient manuscript but seems to be the work of the 17th-century editor of the text, Thomas Gataker (see Hadot (1998a) cc, and (1998b) 28–29). The separation marks we find in our modern editions are rare in this surviving manuscript or in the now lost manuscript which had been handed down by Michael Schütz ('*Toxites*') to Andreas Gesner and was used by Gesner to produce the first printed edition in 1559 (on this see Chapter 3 in this volume). On the photograph of one folio of the remaining manuscript framed as a frontispiece in Farquharson (1944), vol. II, one can clearly see a separation between books XI and XII, and a division into fewer chapters than in modern editions. In this manuscript, only a few books are distinguished one from another: books I to III are separated from each other, and then there is a separation between IV and V, VIII and IX, XI and XII. And there are also fewer chapter separations than in our editions (Hadot (1998b) 28). At the end of book I, as a heading of book II, and again at the beginning of book III, Schütz's now lost manuscript, the *Toxicanus*,

preserved mentions of the place where the following book or books were written:¹ these are the only headings present in the *Meditations*.

Therefore, it is evident that there was even less clarity in the divisions of the *Meditations* in the ancient manuscripts than in our modern editions. And, clearly, the only two ancient headings do not indicate a structure, contrary to what may be the case in the chapter-headings of some post-Hellenistic texts, such as Epictetus' *Discourses* as reported by Arrian. These headings determine the place where the following books were written and (indirectly) they give hints as to the time when they were written; they do not show that there is any thematic unity in the books, nor that the books have any coherent internal structure. Such indications, rather unusual in ancient literature, rather suggest that the books have no structure, but that they were written *au fil de la plume* during certain periods of the life of Marcus. It is only in a mere three cases, namely in chap. 32–34 of book VII, that one can find chapter headings, and that is all.

According to what seems to be the title under which Marcus' *Meditations* were known by Bishop Arethas at the turn of the 10th century and later by the compilers of some Byzantine collections of extracts (see Hadot (1998b) 24), these meditations were written *eis eauton*, namely 'to' and 'for himself'. And presumably Marcus is describing the *Meditations* themselves when he speaks of his 'little notes' (III. 14). This word (*hupomnematia*, as a diminutive of *hupomnemata*) refers to a collection of notes, possibly arranged by the author for his own convenience, but which is not, in any case, set out with any literary form or rhetorical device with publication in mind. If so, Marcus' writings are his notebooks (but not a diary), written day by day for himself and with no intention of publishing them (see Hadot (1998b) 30–43). This is now the most widespread interpretation of Marcus' writing.

However, the structure of Marcus' writing, even if not easily identified, is not completely inexistent. There are dominant themes in most of the books. To get a better view of the structure and form of the *Meditations*, this chapter will first describe separately the content and form of book I and of the remaining 11 books.

1. The Form and Structure of Book I

Book I describes what Marcus owes to his family and teachers; it acknowledges what he received and learned from them. It is a eulogy of his relatives and teachers, an indirect moral portrait of Marcus himself,² an exercise in gratefulness, and the acknowledgment of an ethical legacy. As Rutherford ((1989) 48) notes, there is 'quite simply nothing else like book I of the *Meditations* in the whole of classical literature'.

In contrast with the rest of the books, the structure of book I follows a clear and plain structure.³ It is obviously written with care, with great stylistic unity, and with a repetitive grammatical structure.

The book consists of 17 chapters of increasing length, with a few exceptions: chap. 1 is very short, consisting only of one approximately standard line,⁴ while chap. 16 is the longest of the book, consisting of 31 paragraphs (usually of two or three lines) in the standard edition; though the last chapter, chap. 17, is a little shorter (23 paragraphs) than chap. 16, the intermediate chapters are gradually of increasing length, with the exception of chaps. 10 to 13, which tend to be shorter than the previous ones. This looks as though the author has followed a deliberate pattern.

Moreover, all the chapters have the same grammatical sequence, consisting of the preposition *para* ('from') followed by the genitive case of a person (a proper name or the common name of a relative), in its turn followed by the neuter article *to* ('the') introducing either infinitival clauses or adjectives and participles turned into substantives – and more rarely a clause introduced by *oti* ('that') (see Hadot (1998a) lxi). This structure enables Marcus to describe, for each person he mentions, a quality, a virtue, or a practice, which are the benefits he owes each of them and has usually inherited from them. For instance, in chap. 1, Marcus writes: 'From my grandfather Verus: a good character and the absence of anger', while in chap. 6 he mentions from Diognetus (among other things): 'to become familiar with philosophy'. This is an elliptic construction, and in the extracts from the Byzantine dictionary known as the *Suda*, it is either replaced or glossed by a verb in the first person or by an impersonal verb: for instance when quoting the chapter on Diognetus, the *Suda* writes 'from Diognetus *I learnt*' before the first adjective.⁵ This tends to indicate that the pattern may have seemed a little awkward to the excerptor. However, it is systematic and intentional. And it has a striking effect.

Because of this pattern, the book may appear to be nothing more than a list of what Marcus owes to his relatives and masters. The stylistic pattern reminds one of the form of an inventory or of the acknowledgment of a debt (Martinazzoli (1951) 81–82). Therefore, the book, though obviously planned out and not written *au fil des jours*, seems to be a self-reminder of the benefits Marcus received and an exercise of recollection of his debts. In other words, it is an exercise in gratefulness, relevant to the topic of benefits, familiar to us through Seneca's famous treatise *On Benefits*. And from that point of view, it is not surprising that the book ends with a chapter on Marcus' debts towards the gods, since the benefits one receives from the gods are an important part of one's benefits, even if Marcus' acknowledgment of his debts to the gods differs from Seneca's: Marcus thanks the gods for the care they took of him as an individual, while Seneca acknowledges their benefits towards mankind.⁶ Of course, apart from the exercise of recollection of benefits received, book I

clearly has the other objectives already mentioned. Above all, it is a self-exhortation to practice the virtues Marcus admires so much in his family, in his teachers, and in Antoninus Pius, his adoptive father. Again as Rutherford ((1989) 53) notes, many of the tasks and virtues Marcus singles out in book I are rehearsed in the following books of the *Meditations*. Throughout the whole book, Marcus seems to idealize his relatives and his masters, so as to present them as models of virtues and examples for life worthy of being followed (see again Rutherford (1989) 55–59).

The careful progression of the chapter as Marcus gives the list of his debts, also appears to follow a carefully worked out framework, marked by the passage from common names to proper names, and then back to a proper name: Marcus' inventory of his debts begins with his relatives, all designated by common names ('grandfather', 'genitor', 'mother', 'great-grandfather', 'tutor' in chap. 1–5) it then proceeds with proper names when it comes to his teachers, only to return to a common name ('father') to designate his adoptive father, Antoninus Pius. The only exception to the grammatical framework of *para* followed by a name is chap. 2, where Marcus says 'from my genitor's *reputation* and *memory*', but this is clearly because Marcus has no personal recollection of his father, who probably died when he was young.⁷ Finally, the inventory ends with the gods. Only in one case, his grandfather Verus in the opening chapter, does he simultaneously mention the kinship and the proper name of his relative. In the case of Alexander in I. 10, the epithet of 'grammarian' seems to be a means of disambiguation rather than an exception to this rule. One may think that he has no other choice than to use proper names for his teachers, but this is not evident at all, since, in the case of his 'tutor',⁸ he does not mention his name, and since for instance in the case of Fronto, he could have said: 'my master of rhetoric'. The 'tutor', being more or less a member of the family, appears as a transitional figure between family and teachers, while the place of the chapter on Antoninus seems to acknowledge the quasi divine status of the dead emperor.

These are all indications of the great unity of style, the strong thematic coherence and the clear and progressive structure of the book. It is only in the internal structure of chap. 17 that Marcus seems not to follow a clear framework (Hadot (1998a) xlv–xlvi).

2. The Structure of Books II–XII

Things are far from being so clear in the other books. The remaining books and chapters are of unequal length. Books II and III are the shortest together with book I and XII: they are respectively of 148 and 183 lines in the Teubner edition,⁹ while book I is 190 lines long and book XII 193 lines long. All the

other books are much longer, ranging from 265 lines (book IX) to 303 lines (book VII), so that the division into books is not a division of the work into unities of equal length for editorial purposes. Even if all the books are not separated in the remaining manuscript, it means that these books of unequal length deliberately constitute separate unities – or at least that such is the case with most of them. In the case of books II and III, it is evident that this unity is due to the time and place of their composition, but one cannot say with certainty if this is also the case with the following books. The hypothesis that book VIII was written in Rome, because Marcus alludes so frequently to court life, is far from absurd, but cannot be assumed as certain.¹⁰ The work appears to be a collection of books written over the years, at different places, and forming separate unities with different purposes. As Hadot ((1998b) 263–64) writes,

a close examination allows us to discover some characteristics which are peculiar to each of these books: favourite themes, special vocabularies, the greater or lesser frequency of the literary forms that are used

and a plausible explanation of these distinctive features is that ‘certain preoccupations or readings may have influenced him in different ways at different moments in the process of composition’.

Again as Hadot ((1998b) 264) notes, books II and III are dominated by a sense of the imminence of death and by the pressing necessity of a personal reformation. Book II, as book V, begins with a morning meditation which seems at first sight rather independent from the rest of the book: Marcus reminds himself of all the ‘ungrateful, violent, treacherous, envious men with no sense of common welfare (*akoinonetoí*)’ that he will meet during the day (II. 1. 1) and sets for himself the rule that he cannot be harmed by them and should not be angry with them (II. 1. 3). However, this general advice will also be incorporated into III. 16. 4, while this chapter (the last chapter of book III), like II. 2, begins with the description of the human being as composed of flesh, soul, and the ruling part of the soul (mind). Moreover, in II. 2, Marcus recommends to himself to abandon the lack of care for the community (*akoinonía*) he tolerates in other people in II. 1. 1: ‘to be no longer a puppet pulled by a selfish (*akoinoneton*) impulse’. Book II quickly switches from a morning meditation for the coming day (II. 1. 1) to an hourly meditation for every day (II. 5. 1). III. 1 is a reminder that it is not sufficient to take into account that Marcus has less time to live than the length of time he has already lived (which is the theme of II. 2) but that his mind will soon decline and that it is doubtful whether he will still be able to understand philosophical theory (III. 1. 1).¹¹ Therefore, given the way II. 1 and II. 2 are connected, and the way the end of book III responds to the beginning of book II, the two books seem to have a rather carefully devised structure. And this is all the more striking from the perspective of the main theme

which is echoed, rehearsed, and developed with variations in most of the chapters: you are aging, death is imminent, and so it is time to reform yourself, to be just with other people, to act with a sense of common welfare, not to be afraid of death, and to live in harmony with mankind and nature.

Hence, there is a similar dominant theme in the two books, but there is also a progression from one book to the other, since book II rehearses the same themes but also introduces connected new themes. As early as II. 3, II. 4 and II. 9, Marcus introduces the theme of the providence of nature and the perception of the world as the whole of which man's body is a part, while man's soul is a part of the ruler of the world, and these themes structure Marcus' vision of the world and determine his practical ethics. These themes are interwoven all through books II and III with Marcus' initial recommendation of II. 1 (to be patient with other men) and of II. 2 (to take into account the passing of time and to act accordingly: see again II. 13, II. 14, III. 1, III. 2 and III. 3 among others). This is what Hadot ((1998b) 264) calls an 'interwoven composition'.

But it is only in III. 9–11¹² that Marcus clearly introduces the three philosophical exercises he inherited from Epictetus: the 'faculty of judgment' 'promises absence of precipitation, an appropriation to other men, and consistency with the gods' (III. 9. 2). 'Absence of precipitation' (*aproptosis*) is the main dialectical virtue put forward by the ancient Stoics (Diogenes Laertius VII. 46), 'appropriation' (*oikeiosis*) is the first impulse and the basis of Stoic ethics (Diogenes Laertius VII. 85), and consistency (*akolouthia*) with the gods is an adaptation of the consistency with nature which is the end of Stoic ethics since Zeno (Diogenes Laertius VII. 87). These three 'promises' of the faculty of judgment condense in a nutshell the three philosophical exercises developed by Epictetus, which correspond to the three main acts of the soul he acknowledges: assent, impulse, and desire, as reactions to the passivity of impressions.¹³ It is here, in III. 11, that Marcus introduces for the first time the exercise of assent by briefly expounding the method of a 'nude' 'definition' or 'sketch' of anything presenting itself to the soul's impression.¹⁴ And it is only in III. 13 that he introduces the method of having 'doctrines ready' for the recognition of 'things divine and human',¹⁵ along with the rule of 'doing even the smallest things, as mindful of the bond which unites the divine and human'. The two methods also allude to two of Epictetus' philosophical methods that Marcus will use throughout his work. Having doctrines (*dogmata*) 'ready' (*etoima*) or 'ready at hand' (*prokheira*) is a practice Marcus borrows from Epictetus (among others) who frequently uses the same expression (see *Handbook* 1. 5 among others). Similarly, the rule of doing 'even the smallest things' (*kai to mikrotaton*) with the link between human and divine things in mind, reminds us of Epictetus' rule to 'start from small things' (*Handbook* 12. 2), for instance the spilling of olive oil or the theft of wine, when one wants to be free of emotions and trouble.

The following book, book IV, still includes meditations on death (IV. 5, IV. 6, IV. 14, IV. 19–20, IV. 21, IV. 50) and the brevity of life (IV. 26, IV. 32, IV. 33, IV. 35, IV. 43, IV. 48), but the emphasis is different: except in IV. 17, Marcus does not infer from these meditations the necessity of a personal reformation, but he insists on the transient and ephemeral character of life, and recommends to take advantage of the present ‘with good reason and justice’ (IV. 26. 5) and to live one’s time in conformity with nature (IV. 48. 4). The protreptical stance of books I–III leaves room to a more serene meditation. As Farquharson ((1944) I, 305) notes, ‘the tone is less personal . . . , more speculative and doctrinal’, though it would be difficult to admit, as claimed again by Farquharson ((1944) I, 306), that the book ‘might have been intended for the use of a learner’. The longest chapter of the book, chap. 3 (31 lines), in a book where most of the chapters are short (35 chapters out of 51 are short chapters, of one to six lines), is the only one in the whole book to propose a method of meditation, and it is one of the methodological kernels of the work. It develops one of the methods introduced in III. 13, the meditation of doctrines, to which is now added the necessity of memorizing them under the form of short maxims and elementary truths: ‘let these thoughts be short and elementary’ (*brakheia kai stoikheiode*) (IV. 3. 3) – or under the form of standardized arguments in logical form, like the disjunctive ‘providence or atoms’, of which it is the first occurrence: the latter reappears at IV. 27 and will appear again many times in the following books.¹⁶ Some chapters insist on universal nature (IV. 6, IV. 10, IV. 36, IV. 40, IV. 45) and recommend acting according to the prescriptions of reason, avoiding random actions (IV. 1, IV. 2); IV. 4 and IV. 29 articulate and conflate the two themes. A few chapters include more general ethical thoughts (such as IV. 8, IV. 9, IV. 11, IV. 12, IV. 24). Only a few chapters (IV. 7, IV. 22, IV. 33) refer to the discipline of assent.

Book V, as already mentioned, opens with a meditation to have ‘ready at hand’ every morning. It gives the tone of the whole book, recommending that one should carry out his ‘man’s task’ in accordance with one’s nature. Yet, on the whole, this is a rather abstract book, lacking the vividness of the previous ones – it is tempting to imagine that it was not written on the battlefield, but far from the presence of nature and war. Several chapters are devoted to the agreement between individual nature and universal nature or to life in agreement with nature (V. 3, V. 4, V. 7, V. 8, V. 9, V. 10, V. 28), but the physical view of the universe, including the transient nature of life, tends to fade out in the background – nature is more an abstract end than a concrete environment. Even V. 13, which for the first time reminds us of the difference between the two Stoic principles of the universe, active cause and passive matter (see Diogenes Laertius VII. 134), and alludes to the doctrine of everlasting recurrence, lacks any real sensitivity to nature – it is merely the abstract reminder of a school doctrine. These chapters are supplemented by other

chapters on the end or the definition of the good (V. 12, V. 16, V. 37), and by chapters on man's relationship to other people (V. 3, V. 5, V. 6) and more general ethical considerations (V. 9–10, V. 14, V. 17, V. 34). Only two chapters are devoted to the exercise on impressions like V. 2 and V. 19.

Book VI makes for a striking contrast, by introducing concrete considerations on Marcus' position in Rome and in the universe, and is dominated by the contrast between changing matter and reason. This opposition opens the book, and this physical tenet or similar views are found throughout the book (VI. 5, VI. 13, VI. 14, VI. 17, VI. 36, VI. 39). Again the disjunction between providence or atoms is echoed (VI. 4, VI. 10, VI. 36). Marcus' personal stance on the difference between philosophical life and court life is first introduced at VI. 12, and VI. 30 includes personal prescriptions pertaining to his imperial function: 'take care not to cesarize' (VI. 30. 1); 'in all things like a disciple of Antonin' (VI. 30. 5). The portrait of Antonin in this chapter echoes I. 16. In VI. 44 again, Marcus' role as a Roman and as a man are contrasted and he gives as a rule to govern not only with the welfare of Rome but *also* with the welfare of the world in view: 'As Antoninus, my city and fatherland is Rome; as a man, the universe; only things benefiting to these two cities are good' (VI. 44. 6). This is echoed in a more abstract way in VI. 45 and poetically in VI. 54 through the metaphor of the benefit of the hive and the benefit of the bee. In between, VI. 46–53 give more or less concrete pieces of advice for Marcus' everyday life in Rome (see VI. 46) and his relationship with the court or the people.

Such a concern with Marcus' personal position again dominates book VIII. Many chapters of the book are devoted to Marcus' position as an emperor, and his own practice of philosophy: in VIII. 1, he acknowledges that he cannot live the life of a philosopher,¹⁷ nor gain the reputation of a philosopher, and gives an epitome of what he expects from philosophy: to find happiness 'in doing what man's nature requires', and to attain this by keeping the doctrines 'upon which impulses and actions depend', namely doctrines 'on good and evil, how nothing is good for man which does not make him just, sober, brave and free; how nothing is bad which does not produce the effects opposite of these just mentioned' (VIII. 1.5, Farquharson translation modified) – obviously this is basic Stoic ethical theory. Other chapters directly referring to Marcus' function and experience as an Emperor include VIII. 3–5, VIII. 8–9, VIII. 25, VIII. 30–31, VIII. 37, VIII. 51, while some others refer directly to his own age, character, or experience such as VIII. 2, VIII. 4, VIII. 12, VIII. 34 (war experience), VIII. 42, VIII. 44. Like IV. 3, which recommended a retreat into his own self, VIII. 48 recommends concentrating on the ruling part of himself. Many of the chapters refer to the nature of the universe (VIII. 5, VIII. 6, VIII. 16, VIII. 20) and the book ends with the contemplation of nature (VIII. 57) and some rules of behavior towards other people (VIII. 58–61). One of the keys to the book and to the interweaving of Marcus' personal role as emperor

with his place in the universe seems to be given by VIII. 27, which briefly runs as follows: ‘three relations: one to the surrounding cause, one to the divine cause from which everything happens to everyone, and one to your contemporaries’. This sketches a relation to other men as well as a wider relation to nature and the gods, as VI. 44. 6. As in most of the books, some chapters also recall the exercise on impressions, as VIII. 29 and VIII. 40.

The words of VIII. 13 – ‘continually and, if possible, for every impression, treat it as physicist, a specialist of emotions and a dialectician’ – strikingly echo VII. 67. 3: ‘you have abandoned the hope of being a dialectician and a physicist’. This echo may explain the function of book VII placed between the two books directly dedicated to Marcus’ position as a Roman emperor. Two themes dominate book VII: nature on the one hand and the advice on being patient (VII. 26) and acting correctly towards other human beings on the other hand – meditations on nature include reflections ranging from man’s position as a part of nature (VII. 13), to the flow of all things (VII. 19) and their interweaving in nature (VII. 9). VII. 67. 3 precisely explains that, if you have abandoned the hope of being an expert in philosophical technical areas such as physics and dialectic, you may nevertheless become ‘a godlike man and yet not being recognized as such by anyone’, and be ‘free, modest, sociable (*koinonikos*) and obedient to god’. This is partly the promise of the ‘faculty of judgment’ at III. 9. 2: ‘appropriation to other men, and consistency with the gods’. What seems therefore to dominate book VII is the effort to achieve these rules in general, though Marcus’ personal position as Emperor, as detailed in books VI and VIII, does not allow him to have the accomplishments of a professional philosopher. This, of course, does not necessarily mean that books VI to VIII were consciously planned to match a deliberate structure (though it could be the case that we have here again a case of ‘interwoven composition’) – it rather seems as though Marcus had felt the need to deepen his meditation on his own role as an emperor in book VIII, after his first attempts in II. 17 and in book VI, book VII concentrating rather on the more everyday exercises he needed (on this function of book VII, see Farquharson (1944) I, 351). The more general and less personal tone of book VII is confirmed by the long sequence of quotations of chaps. 31 to 52, a practice that will reappear in XI. 22–39.

Most of the chapters of books IX to XI are short, but, on the other hand, books IX and XI include three very long chapters (IX. 1, IX. 42, XI. 18, one of the longest, being 48 lines long). IX. 1 is a long, unusual chapter on impieties. It reassesses the three areas of Epictetus’ philosophical exercises, by describing failure or misconduct in these areas as impieties against nature: injustice, lying, and intemperance are impieties against universal nature (see Hadot (1998b) 232–38). The articulation of these three themes in IX. 1 can be recognized in the other chapters of the book, where the perspective of nature sets the tone for

most of the chapters, together with the reintroduction of the themes of the flow, death, matter and active cause ('outer cause' designates fate and universal nature in IX. 6 and IX. 31, as noted again by Hadot (1998b) 271). IX. 31 evokes justice again as in IX.1 but adds impassibility. The efficiency and role of prayer is analyzed in IX. 40, as a consequence of the central role played by piety, gods and nature in the book. IX. 29 articulates the flow of universal cause to the art of governing: 'do not hope for the *Republic* of Plato but be satisfied if you can make the smallest progress'. This modest ambition as a ruler is contrasted with the 'tragic' character of a great military ruler like Alexander, since he has not beheld the vanity of things and the transient nature of world and fame (echoing of course the 'take care not to cesarize' of VI. 30. 1). Here again, as in books VI and VIII, Marcus sets up his personal position as Emperor with respect to his position as a man in the universe. Stoic physics, here, has direct consequences on Marcus' conception of his political activity. It looks like the reassessment of a thought previously entertained, which finally succeeds in attaining a more satisfactory formulation. The book, as noted by Hadot ((1998b) 271), contains some other personal notations (IX. 2. 4, IX. 21). As also noted by Hadot ((1998b) 271), the book recommends penetrating 'into the ruling principle of other people's soul' in order to understand their motives and to excuse them (IX. 18, IX. 22, IX. 27, IX. 34), a theme already present at the very end of VIII (VIII. 61) and even in IV. 38.

Books X and XI give the impression of a greater thematic dispersion, but they tend more than the previous books to concentrate on rules, doctrines, and elementary thoughts, and to insist on the exercise on impressions described as early as III. 11. This is also manifest in the gathering of quotations and anecdotes, which constitute the second half of XI, in XI. 22–39. The books give the impression that the question of the articulation of Marcus' position as Emperor with his way of dealing with philosophy, as well as the practical consequences of his philosophical stance on his actions, is now solved, after the initial remarks of II. 17 and the discussions of books VI, VIII and IX, and that Marcus is now concentrating on his everyday exercises and on the meditations of the doctrines (note however the still personal notations of X. 10 and X. 36). X. 9 and X. 10 emphasize the importance of doctrines and of a theoretical method for action, as X. 34, and this is echoed in XI. 18, which enumerates nine 'headings' (*kephalaia*) to 'memorize' (XI. 18. 19) and to have 'ready at hand' (XI. 18. 21), recalling the 'short and elementary truths' recommended in IV. 3. 3.

Book X opens with a dialogue of Marcus with his own soul. In X. 2, he exhorts himself to conform to his animal, reasonable, and social natures. Many other chapters will insist on the nature of the universe, formulating again the disjunctive 'atoms or nature' (X. 6. 1), and insisting that Marcus is only a part of

this universal nature. X. 33 is a chapter on fate and responsibility, recalling the Chrysippean comparison of the rolling cylinder preserved by Cicero (*On Fate* 42) and in Aulus Gellius (VII. 6. 2). Marcus also has a rather long chapter on the virtues (X. 8).

In XI. 1, Marcus describes the capacity of a reasonable soul to see itself and recommends himself to live according to the life of the soul, while insisting in contrast on the mutability of things. This, along with the nine 'headings' to memorize of XI. 18 constitute the core of book XI, while the end of the book (XI. 22–39), as already noted, is a collection of quotations and philosophical anecdotes or *khbreiai* (a philosophical genre). The book also contains some unusual developments, not echoed elsewhere in the *Meditations*, like the history of tragedy and comedy in XI. 6. Chapters 19 to 21 are also original ethical notations.

Book XII usually strikes commentators as different from the previous ones, in tone, vocabulary, and style (see Farquharson (1944) I, 418–19; Hadot (1998b) 272–73). Farquharson ((1944) I, 419) feels that it is left unfinished, at least in certain chapters, while Theiler ((1974) 347) thinks that it deliberately ends with the word 'peace'. Though there are some recurring expressions and motifs which do not occur in any other book, as noted again by Hadot ((1998b) 272–73), the book rather gives the impression of being a kind of grand finale, rehearsing, one last time, many of the themes of the previous books, even of books II–III: piety and justice in XII. 1 as in IX. 1, the threefold composition of the human being (body, pneumatic soul, and mind) in XII. 2 as in II. 2, the passing of time and the equality of all moments in IX. 32 and XII. 36, the relationship to universal nature in XII. 23, the use of doctrines 'ready at hand' in XII. 9 and in XII. 24, the vision of things as they are in XII. 10. A few themes are more clearly developed here than earlier on, as the providence of the gods in XII. 5, XII. 12, and XII. 14–15 (where the alternative between atoms or providence makes room for a more subtle distinction between fate and providence). XII. 23 and XII. 24 encapsulate much of the wisdom of the *Meditations*, while XII. 36 sounds like a testamental claim in the face of death, a last thought for a last breath: 'leave then at peace'.

From this brief sketch of the structure of the *Meditations*, one can reach the conclusion that there is some kind of order in the work. Each chapter forms an autonomous unity but it has a certain place in the whole book, and each book has a certain specificity in the whole work, and all this tends to indicate if not a deliberate literary composition, a certain structure, an arrangement of thoughts determined by the changing times, places, occupations, and concerns of Marcus. While book I acknowledges that which Marcus has inherited from those who influenced him in his youth, and books II–III meditate on the passing of time, the danger of death at war and the pressing necessity to act philosophically, the central books VI and VIII reflect Marcus' concern to live

philosophically as a Roman emperor, in his personal position, age, and times, and the other books are an attempt to meditate on and apply Stoic dogmas and various other readings to the different aspects of his personal position which he meditates in books I, II, III, VI, and VIII.

3. The Form of Books II–XII

The form of books II to XII is very different from the regular form of book I. It ranges from one-line sentences to long paragraphs of 48 lines, from personal meditations to short quotations. Quotations, however, are far from overwhelming the work and, with a few exceptions, they are collected at two specific occasions, in VII. 31–52 and XI. 22–39. They usually are short quotations of one or two lines. Most of the work is therefore Marcus' own writing.

The number of short chapters, constituted by a short maxim one line long, though not the majority of chapters, is however noteworthy: for one-sixth of the chapters are made up of this kind of short maxim. The careful phrasing of maxims is a rhetorical and philosophical technique, which is part of a process of meditation and memorization (see Alexandre (1979)). If many of the passages of the *Meditations*, as these carefully written maxims testify, show a great care in their composition,¹⁸ it is not because these maxims, meditations, and prescriptions have a reader in mind except for Marcus himself, but rather this makes memorization and reading easier for Marcus himself. A piece of self-advice such as 'take care not to cesarize' (VI. 30. 1) clearly shows that the *Meditations* are for Marcus' own private use, and are not supposed to be read by anyone else.

Among the longer chapters, one can note the considerable importance given to prescriptive chapters, consisting partly or completely of verbs in the imperative or in the infinitive (or preceded by 'you have to', *dei*): 8 of the 17 chapters of book II, 11 of the 16 chapters of book III, 25 of the 51 chapters of book IV, 21 of the 37 chapters of book V, 21 of the 59 chapters of book VI, 33 of the 75 chapters of book VII, 31 of the 61 chapters of book VIII, 21 of the 42 chapters of book IX, 24 of the 38 chapters of book X, 6 of the 39 chapters of book XI, and 15 of the 35 chapters of book XII. With the exception of book XI (this exception is mainly due to the fact that a good part of the book is made up of quotations), every book has usually almost half of its chapters written in a prescriptive form. And of the remaining chapters of each book, not all of them are purely descriptive: some of the other Stoic 'sayables', beside propositions and imperatives, are frequently used by Marcus, mainly what the Stoics used to call 'similar to propositions', because they include a particle or the expression of an emotion, e.g.: 'how beautiful is the Parthenon' (Diogenes Laertius VII. 67). This kind of expression is used some 15 times. Other linguistic forms include

purely interrogative chapters. Such a proportion of chapters in a non-descriptive form is characteristic of the meditative character of the work. However, one has precisely to note that most of the prescriptions are not practical: most of the infinitives and imperatives apply to verbs connoting meditation, thinking, observation, or memorization: ‘remember’ (*memneso*) is used 24 times, and ‘to remember’ (*memesthai*) is used 13 times (Rigo (2010) 129). Other prescriptive verbs include ‘say to yourself’ (II. 1), ‘think’ (*epinoein* or *ennoein*), ‘contemplate’ (*theorein*), ‘see’ (*blepein*, *oran*), ‘have an impression’ (*phantazou*), ‘meditate’ (*enthumein*). In contrast, imperatives directly prescribing an action are rather rare (see II. 5, II. 11, III. 5, IV. 2, IV. 17, IV. 26, VI. 23, VI. 30, VI. 50, VII. 3, VII. 4, VII. 7, VII. 31, VIII. 5, IX. 11, IX. 29, X. 2, X. 3, X. 4, X. 16, X. 22, X. 36, XI. 16, XII. 16, XII. 20, XII. 36), and even among those prescriptions a great number are very general: ‘love mankind, follow god’ (VII. 31), ‘be brave’ (X. 22); ‘be friendly, benevolent, kind...’ (X. 36), ‘constantly live the most beautiful life’ (XI. 16). Therefore the work, which has some protreptical aspects, especially in book II and III, is not actually full of practical rules, but clearly appears, as it is usually assumed, as a collection of meditations and exercises.

Of course, not all of the chapters correspond to exercises – some, especially the chapters where Marcus meditates on his own position as an emperor are not the rehearsal of school doctrine. However, chapters such as VIII. 1 and II. 17 are meditations on his own position which Marcus probably wants to remember precisely when he has some doubts about his own situation. The aim of such chapters seems to be a clear formulation of the relationship between philosophy and Marcus’ imperial role. This is probably supposed to help him each time such questions about himself arise.

The techniques of writing Marcus uses: maxims, formulation, and meditation of doctrines, short lists of headings, logical formulation of arguments, self-dialogue, self-exhortation, exercises on impressions, morning meditation for the day to come, reflections on his own position, repetitions and rephrasing of the same thought, all appear as self-meditating writing techniques, as practiced by philosophers as early as Socrates (according to Epictetus II. 1. 32–33) (see Plato, *Phaedrus* 276d). The frequency of the verb ‘remember’ in Marcus reminds us of Epictetus (*memneso* is used 35 times by Epictetus including 16 occurrences in the *Handbook*), and, as in Epictetus, this imperative introduces exercises of memorization of doctrines and rules. This function is clearly assigned to everyday writing by Epictetus in his *Dissertations* I. 1. 25: ‘here are the thoughts that philosophers ought to meditate; this is what they should write down every day, and what they should exercise’. The thoughts one must have ‘ready at hand’ must be written down and read continually (III. 24. 103; see Hadot (1998b) 48–51). Marcus himself never gives any explanation of why he is writing: but he does not need to do so; he would have, were he not writing

for himself, but since he is writing for himself, all he has to do is write, not explain *to himself* why he does so.

NOTES

- * I wish to express my gratitude to Ada Bronowski and Jeff Barnouw for kindly checking and correcting my English.
- 1. On the question whether the subscription of book II is supposed to apply only to book III, or to all the following books until book XII, see Chapter 3 in this volume. See also Chapter 3 for an elucidation of these indications and their consequences concerning the date of composition of the books, and finally, for indications concerning the dates of composition of the *Meditations*.
- 2. As Rutherford ((1989) 51) notes, it is an ‘autobiography . . . of a very oblique and reserved kind’ in the sense that it is an ‘account of Marcus’ spiritual education, but couched entirely in the form of the qualities he admired most in his teachers’. See Hadot’s ((1998a) lvii–lviii) very balanced assessment on the rare presence of the first person in book I.
- 3. Rutherford (1989) 45–47. See also Hadot ((1998a) liv–lvi), who argues convincingly that book I amplifies some sketches that may be found in the following books (presumably antedating book I): Antoninus’ eulogy in VI. 30 seems to be a draft of I. 16, while V. 31 seems to outline the first project of the exposition of Marcus’ attitude and gratitude towards the gods and his relatives, which is the substance of book I.
- 4. The first sentence is 18 syllables long. This is close to one of the standard lengths of a prose line, the hexameter of 16 syllables, acknowledged as such by e.g. Galen, *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* VIII, 1, 23–24, p. 486, 1–9 De Lacy, V 655 K. But the standard prose line was variable in length, sometimes shorter, sometimes longer, as is the case in Galen, *op. cit.* VIII, 1, 11, p. 534, 32–33 De Lacy, V 716 K. On the various lengths of standard prose lines, see Birt (1974) 157–222.
- 5. On this see Schironi (2000) 214 and Chapter 3 in this volume.
- 6. See Seneca, *On Benefits* IV. 4–9.
- 7. See Hadot (1998a) lxx. Farquharson’s translation (‘from my father’s reputation and my memory of him’) is misleading here.
- 8. His identity remains unknown, as acknowledged by Hadot (1998a) lxxx–lxxxi.
- 9. The lines of the Teubner edition, with their ± 24 syllables, are probably a little longer than some of the standard lines in ancient manuscript (on the variation of length, see n. 4 above).
- 10. This hypothesis was formulated by Breithaupt (1913) 39. It is discussed by Haines (1914) 281–82 and Hadot (1998b) 262.
- 11. Marcus’ expression here, ‘the theory pertaining to the experience of things divine and human’, alludes to the Stoic definition of wisdom as the ‘science of things divine and human’ ([Plutarch], *Placita* proem. 2).
- 12. As in Theiler (1974) 64–67, chap. 9–11 must be considered as a unique chapter: see Theiler (1974) 312.

13. Epictetus, *Dissertations* III. 2. 1–2; see Marcus Aurelius XI. 37 (quoting Epictetus). On the three *topoi* in Epictetus, and their importance in Marcus, see Hadot (1978) and (1998b) 82–100. It is Marcus' own inflection to identify insistently the exercise on desire with following the gods and being in harmony with nature (in Epictetus, for instance in I. 21. 2, it is more diffuse and vague).
14. He then says: 'to the recommendations mentioned above, let one more be added'. On this method, see Hadot (1998b) 104–105. On the distinction between definition and sketch, see Diogenes Laertius VII. 60. On the discipline of assent, see Hadot (1998b) 101–27.
15. Philosophy again. See n. 11 above.
16. On this recurrent 'disjunctive', see Hadot (1998b) 147–63 and Giavatto (2008) 213–28.
17. In XI. 7, he returns to his 'occupation in life', and says that 'no other occupation in life is so fitted for the practice of philosophy as this in which you find yourself now'. This disconcerting statement may not necessarily reveal a 'shift' in his 'attitude' to his position as an emperor, despite the thoughts of Farquharson (1944) 864. The two positions may be reconciled if one interprets them as signifying that Marcus' function may be inauspicious to his reputation as a philosopher, but may be highly appropriate to *practice* philosophy without showing off and without being tempted to write treatises, speculate, or spend time in theoretical technicalities, as he writes in I. 17. 22.
18. For a detailed treatment of the style of Marcus and his literary devices, see Dalfen (1967); Rutherford (1989) 126–77; Hadot (1998b) 257–60.

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CHAPTER 21

The Style of the *Meditations*

Angelo Giavatto

Besides their philosophical meaning the *Meditations* have traditionally interested a broader audience of classicists because of their linguistic and stylistic features. This is first of all due to Marcus Aurelius' rhetorical skills expressed throughout the *Meditations*, which made it a significant text in the literary context of the second century AD, secondly to the fact that by some readers it has been considered – quite unsatisfactorily, one should admit – the first *journal intime* in Western literature, and lastly to the fact that it is a precious testimony on the use of Greek in the Roman (Latin speaking) world during the Imperial Era. In the last decades, the style of the *Meditations* has also drawn the attention of scholars interested in its philosophical content; this helped to appreciate the fact that stylistic choices are to be taken as essential elements of Marcus Aurelius' philosophical agenda. Following this approach I will provide an overview on Marcus' stylistic procedures considering their role within the broader ethico-practical background and function of the *Meditations*.

1. *Meditations* in Greek

The first feature that strikes the reader of the *Meditations* is the fact that this work, written by a Roman emperor, has been composed in Greek and not in Latin. There are two main reasons for this fact: on the one hand the Roman upper class of that period was substantially bilingual and had a bilingual education, which allowed them a perfect fluency in the Greek language (on bilingualism in antiquity see Adams et al. (2002)); on the other hand Greek was considered the language of philosophy at that time, since philosophy itself, originally, 'had entered Rome as a Greek importation' (Long (2003) 184). Most of Marcus' philosophical reading was actually in Greek, in particular the transcriptions of Epictetus' discourses, the main hypotext of the *Meditations*.

Marcus' Greek – the morphological features of which have been studied by Giuseppe Ghedini in a monograph of 1926 (but see also Schekira (1919), particularly for philosophical vocabulary, and Breithaupt (1913) 65–96) – is characterized by a high degree of rhetorical refinement as well as by a certain complexity and syntactic awkwardness, which, in some cases, is a sign that Marcus was far from fully completing that particular passage (see for instance 1,16).

Greek was, then, a cultural and a philosophical choice for Marcus. From the latter viewpoint, Greek did not only have an authoritative importance compared to Latin: as the first Stoics themselves had already experienced (see Cicero, *De finibus* 3,5 and 4,7), this language also allowed a particular linguistic freedom and creativity, especially in terms of new formations (for Marcus' neologisms see the list in Schekira (1919) 263–65).

The most striking features of Marcus' Greek morphology are:

- (a) diminutives (see Szmuska (1964) and Urbán Fernández (1994)) that Marcus mainly uses in order to lower the value given to an object by men or to put it in the right perspective: for instance *pneumation*, 'little breath' (2,2,1; 5,33,6 etc.), *sômaton*, 'little body' (1,17,7; 4,39,3 etc.), *psycharion*, 'little soul' (4,41; 5,33,4 etc.);
- (b) substantivated adjectives (which primarily appear in Book 1; see *infra* Appendix), which allow to objectify a virtue or an attitude, as it was common in philosophical Greek: for instance *to kaloêtes kai aorgêton*, 'the (fact of being) well-disposed and not irascible' (1,1);
- (c) substantivated infinitives or infinitive propositions that aim at abstraction and generality as the substantivated adjectives do: for instance *to labein phantasian tou khrêizein diorthôseôs kai therapeias tou êthous*, 'the fact of getting the impression of the need for correction and treatment of character' (1,7,1), *to neurospasteisthai kath'hormên*, 'the fact of being pulled by impulse like marionettes' (6,16,1);
- (d) single terms, characterized by a privative alpha followed by the indication of a wrong habit: for instance *adiapseuston*, 'not deceitful', 4,49,5, *amemp-simoiron*, 'not complaining of one's lot', *ametaptôtos*, 'unchanging' (which corresponds to *bebaios*, 'steadfast', of 1,16,5 and 6,30,12; see Giavatto (2008) 125–29).

Although these seem to be details, the philosophical value of such stylistic solutions should not be neglected. A theoretical explanation of (d) will help to understand this. By writing the *Meditations* Marcus aims at keeping the principles of Stoicism alive in his spirit, through repetition. This helps those principles to become a stable part of Marcus' conscience and to guide his behavior. Therefore, the *Meditations* have to be considered a

tool for Marcus' philosophical path as a *prokoptôn*, 'someone who makes progress'; a path like this quite often assumes the form of a *diorthôsis*, a 'correction' (1,7,1, but see also 1,15,8) of wrong habits, i.e. a philosophical practice that aims at *rectifying* habits, which are in themselves forms of *deviations* from right habits:

Do not act unwillingly nor selfishly nor without self-examination, nor with divergent motives. Let no affectation veneer your thinking. Be neither a busy talker, nor a busybody. Moreover, let the God within be the guardian of a real man, a man of ripe years, a statesman, a Roman, a magistrate, who has taken his post like one waiting for the Retreat to sound, ready to depart, needing no oath nor any man as witness. And see that you have gladness of face, no need of service from without nor the peace that other men bestow. You should stand upright, not be held upright. (3,5, trans. Farquharson) [T1]

This text shows that the self-exhortation within the *Meditations* oscillates between banishing wrong habits (the first part of the text) and recommending proper attitudes, which are to be followed. What makes *composita* like *adiap-seuston*, 'not deceitful', worth analyzing is the fact that they help *both* describing the wrong habit that Marcus himself seems – or risks – to follow and suggesting to him that he overcome it: if 'be truthful' would risk to be a vague exhortation to an imperfect man as Marcus considered himself, 'do not be deceitful' allows him to vividly perceive the habit that he observes in himself and in his fellow men – the tendency to lie – and to start his correction from there.

Marcus' syntax is terse, occasionally contorted, mostly founded on his adherence to a sentential style. The next two paragraphs will be devoted to combinational aspects, which concern the propositional level of Marcus' style.

2. Brief Form

The *Meditations* is a writing with a quite precise organization and structure (see Chapter 20 by Jean-Baptiste Gourinat, within this volume): the work is divided into 12 books and each of them is organized in chapters, the number of which varies from 16 (book 3) to 75 (book 7). The entire work counts 488 chapters. Since the *Meditations* is quite a short work – 113 pages in Joachim Dalfen's critical edition – the average length of each chapter is compendious as well (less than a quarter of a page). If one, in addition, regards the fact that some chapters are one page or more in length (e.g. 11,18), one should take into account that others are extremely short, as is the case for the following text: 'Upright, not made upright' (7,12). [T2]. Even when a chapter has a certain length, some parts of it, in particular the ending, are characterized by a striking shortness: this

is the case for 3,5 [T1], a chapter counting nine lines in Dalfen's edition, which ends with an expanded, but still short version of 7,12 [T2]: 'you should stand upright, not be made upright'.

A first reason that allows understanding the preeminence of brief forms in the *Meditations* is the fact that short sentences impress the reader through their straightforwardness and through their – often apparent – simplicity (and therefore memorability). Both these stylistic features are at the core of Marcus' conception of style as expressed in the *Meditations*: 'Speak both in the senate and to every man of whatever rank with propriety, without affectation. Use a healthy style' (8,30, trans. Farquharson modified; see also the whole 1,7, as well as 3,5; 4,51; 10,33,1) [T3]. As this text clearly states, Marcus believes that stylistic simplicity is a way of using language in the most natural and healthy form, respecting both the situational context and the nature of the interlocutor, according to the Stoic ideal of a rhetoric, which restricts itself to saying what is necessary (see e.g. Diogenes Laertius 7,59) and to what is true.

One passage within the *Meditations* allows the reader to understand Marcus' reason for using short forms better:

For one bitten by true doctrines even the briefest and most familiar saying is reminder enough to dispel sorrow and fear, for instance: 'leaves, the wind scatters some on the face of the ground; like unto them are the children of men'. (10,34,1–2, trans. Farquharson) [T4]

A brief utterance, in this instance a very well known quotation from Homer (*Iliad* 6,147–49), comparing human generations with leaves, is a tool that a man can use to recall a principle, notably a *true* principle, if it has already 'bitten' him, i.e. if that man has already made it a part of his spirit through study and repetition.

Brief form is not only an external instrument, which helps *recalling* and *memorizing* a philosophical principle. It can also be a part of the presentation and demonstration of those principles. In other terms, short forms participate in both *creating* a stable set of principles in the spirit of a *prokoptôn* and in always *keeping* it alive (on this idea of *keeping* the doctrines alive see 7,2,1). Interestingly, this corresponds with the concept of a maxim that already Aristotle enunciated in his *Rhetoric*:

A maxim is an assertion – not, however, one about particulars, such as what kind of a person Iphicrates is, but on a general sort, and not about everything ... but about things that involve actions and are to be chosen or avoided in regard to action. As a result, since enthymemes are like syllogisms about such things, the conclusions of enthymemes and [either of] the premises (with the [full] syllogism omitted) are maxims. (2,21, 1394a21–28, trans. Kennedy) [T5]

In addition to the striking reference to the ethico-practical utility of maxims at the beginning, this text shows the connection between demonstration and use of maxims: these latter can be considered as *parts* – in particular as premises or conclusions – of a rhetorical syllogism. Marcus Aurelius seems to share this attitude and to use a short rendering as a *stage* or as the *goal* itself of his discussion or demonstration (see again [T1] as an example of his method). If this is the case, the simple mentioning of that short proposition will help not only to keep a principle alive, but also to recall the entire dialectical process that led to accepting and to integrating it into his own philosophical perspective. Using the words of Monique Alexandre from a 1979 seminal paper on this topic, ‘le travail de la méditation est de refaire le chemin d’argumentation, des représentations, qui aboutit à ce dogme, à ce précepte’ (‘the function of the meditation is to redo the path of the argument, of the impressions, that leads to this rule, to this precept’, (1979) 150).

3. The Self-Educational Style of the *Meditations*

A reader of the *Meditations*, especially if he is mostly accustomed to later – i.e. modern, in the broadest sense of the word – philosophical literature, will be struck by the distance of Marcus’ style from that of a philosophical treatise. But ancient philosophy has actually accustomed its public to stylistic idiosyncrasies and a treatise is just one of the forms chosen for philosophical discourse in antiquity, from Aristotle on: readers of ancient philosophical texts are rather used to deal with philosophical poems, dialogues, philosophical speeches, and commentaries.

Let us consider again both the end of [T1] and [T2], respectively ‘you should stand upright, not be held upright’ and ‘upright, not held upright’. In the first case, it is evident that the proposition is not a descriptive one, but rather contains a form of an exhortation or, one could say, of an order. Even a minimal degree of sensibility for conciseness would suggest that also the second proposition is an exhortation, perhaps even more cogent because of its peremptory simplicity. This may be explained through the exhortative ethico-practical dimension of the *Meditations* I alluded to on several occasions; it inevitably influences its style and therefore merits some focused observations.

Going back to the forms of philosophical literature in antiquity, one may reasonably say that the dialogue actually is the form that helps to understand the *educational* style of the *Meditations* best, so that the work can actually be considered a self-dialogue. In particular, the model would be a paideutical – rather than purely dialectical – dialogue with at least two characters: a master,

i.e. a person who possesses a particular philosophical knowledge or habit and who agrees to share it with other people, and a pupil, who is conscious of his philosophical need of improvement – of his condition being that of a *prokoptôn* – and who is willing to accept the teaching of his master. In the case of Marcus Aurelius this simple combination is complicated by the fact that both characters correspond to the same person, Marcus himself. For these reasons the *Meditations* has been interpreted, extensively by Dalfen (1967), but also by Rutherford ((1989) 21–26), as a text deeply influenced by diatribe, the ancient rhetorical mode based on the confrontation of two interlocutors – one mostly being a teacher – and characterized by the dialectic between protreptical attitude and censure; the second interlocutor may become fictional (*fictivus interlocutor*) (for an overview on ancient diatribe see Uthemann and Görgemanns (2004)). Besides, the diatribe shares many of Marcus' stylistic tools, i.e. comparisons (taken from daily life and from the natural world; see Bushnell (1905) and (1908); Dalfen (1967) 101–34 and Giavatto (2008) 149–205), *exempla* (presentations of exemplary figures of the past), quotations (see Cortassa (1989)) as well as specific rhetorical figures, in particular isocolon (see e.g. 4,7), homoioteleuton, anaphora, and alliteration.

Recognizing that in the *Meditations* we are faced with a communicational situation that seems to be explainable through dialogue allows us to appreciate one of the most evident features of Marcus' style. Let us consider [T1] again, this time using some typographical marks in order to highlight this specific point:

Do not act unwillingly nor selfishly nor without self-examination, nor with divergent motives. *Let* no affectation *veneer* your thinking. *Be neither* a busy talker, *nor* a busybody. Moreover, *let* the God within *be* the guardian of a real man, a man of ripe years, a statesman, a Roman, a magistrate, who has taken his post like one waiting for the Retreat to sound, ready to depart, needing no oath nor any man as witness. And *see* that you have gladness of face, no need of service from without nor the peace that other men bestow. *You should* stand upright, not be held upright. [T1bis]

As is common in any kind of dialogue between two interlocutors, in particular in an *educational* dialogue, the message must assume an exhortative form, which is the way in which the interlocutor who possesses some authority or some additional knowledge can intervene in the beliefs and in the behavior of the other one. In the *Meditations* this exhortative dimension is expressed through the use of imperatives and infinites with iussive value. Additionally, the exhortation is often objectivized through the use of *klhrê* and *dei* forms ('it is necessary to', 'it needs to'). Since Marcus in most cases employs a 'correctional' attitude – instead of 'do *x*' (*x* being a good habit), 'do not do *y*' (*y* being a bad

habit) – those forms are mostly negatives. [T1] is once again a helpful example, for in this text one may observe a negative imperative of the second-person singular (*mête energei*, ‘do not act’), a negative imperative of the third-person singular (*mête kallôpizetô*, ‘may (elegance) not affect (your mind)’), an imperative of the third-person singular (*estô*, ‘may (the God within) be’) and a *khrê* construction (*einai khrê*, ‘it needs to be (upright)’). For the use of infinites with iussive value, which are absent in [T1], see e.g. 2,1,1 *heôthen prolegein heautôi*, ‘say to yourself every morning’ and for *dei* construction e.g. 4,7 *dei kata lexin parakolouthen tois legomenois ktl.*, ‘in discourse it needs to follow what is said etc.’.

A further, strictly connected point has to be made. The *Meditations* is a philosophical writing based on an intellectualistic conception of the right behavior: a man who *knows* the right principles of philosophy, who has been bitten by this kind of *knowledge* (see [T4]), will consequently act properly. For this reason, together with their function as constant *exhortation* to proper acting, the *Meditations* function as a tool for constantly *transmitting* philosophically proper knowledge. In other words, it does not only exhort Marcus to do something right – or not to do something wrong – but it also invites him to *take cognizance* of right notions that help acting properly. This function, mixed with the imperative character described above, justifies a further category of injunctions within the work: Marcus does not only ‘have to do something’ (or ‘to avoid something’), but also ‘to say to himself that’ (2,1,1), ‘to ask himself’ (e.g. 5,11), ‘to think that’, ‘to reflect on’ (e.g. 2,2,4), ‘to have a particular thought at hand’ (e.g. 5,1,1), ‘to remember that’ (e.g. 2,4,1), ‘to observe that’ (e.g. 4,48,3), and ‘to understand that’ (e.g. 2,4,2). Through these formulas, moral and cognitional sphere are linked under the heading of exhortation.

4. Repetition and Variation

If one opens a philosophical treatise, one would probably expect quite a fixed structure, within which a general issue is fully discussed, inasmuch as its *parts* (*a*, *b*, *c* etc.) are treated one after the other according to a demonstrative and/or descriptive order: *b* presupposes *a*, *c* presupposes *b* and/or *a* and so on. As I have already recalled several times, this structure and this progression cannot be observed in the *Meditations*. The reason should be clear, now: Marcus aims at keeping alive the doctrines within his mind through *repetition*. Therefore, the different subjects must be treated several times, with regularity, but without any precise order, if one excludes the case in which a contingent necessity in Marcus’ life imposed on him to treat a particular philosophical subject; but such a necessity is something that we cannot reconstruct.

If this is the regulative principle of the *Meditations*, we will therefore expect a pattern like the following: $a, b, c, b^1, c^1, b^2, a^1, b^3$ etc. On the methodological level this would mean that, if we want to know exactly what Marcus thought about a , we have to search for $a^1, a^2, a^3 \dots a^n$ throughout the entire work, collate all occurrences of that particular discussion and try to deduce Marcus' position – if he actually was consistent on this point, which is not always the case.

Since we are focusing on style here, what interests us is to understand what *stylistically* differentiates all occurrences of a particular theme. It is exactly within this particular procedure that Marcus expresses a fundamental aspect of his education, namely his rhetorical ability that he acquired mostly through his long acquaintance with the rhetorician Fronto (there exists a rich bibliography on their connection: see – recent and comprehensive – Kasulke (2005); on the role of variation in rhetorical education see Fronto, *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3,12): this procedure of variation is seldom banal or stylistically flat and every new version of a particular philosophical point enriches it with a new insight or with new information. Let us consider an example which concerns a physical subject:

Either an ordered Universe or a medley heaped together mechanically. But actually *there is* an order; or can order subsist in you and disorder in the Whole? And that, too, when all things are so distinguished and yet intermingled and sympathetic. (4,27, trans. Farquharson modified, since I keep the text of the manuscripts *alla kosmos*, 'but actually *there is* an order', accepting Theiler's expunction of the particle *men*, 'on the one hand', before both words) [T6]

Either all comes to pass from one fountain of mind, as in a single organic body, and the part must not find fault with what is for the good of the whole; or else there are atoms, nothing but a mechanical mixture and dispersal. (9,39,1, trans. Farquharson) [T7]

Either a medley, a mutual interlacing of atoms and their scattering; or unification, order, providence. If then the former, why do I so much as desire to wear out my days in a world compounded by accident and in a confusion governed by chance? Why am I concerned about anything else than how I am in one way or another to 'return to earth'? And why am I troubled? Whatever I do, the scattering into atoms will come upon me. But, if the alternative be true, I bow my head, I am calm, I take courage in that which orders all. (6,10, trans. Farquharson) [T8]

First, what is my position in regard to others and how we came into the world for one another; and, to put it in a different way, that I was born to protect them, as the ram protects his flock or the bull his herd. Then, going further back, proceed from the truth that, unless the Universe is mere atoms, it is Nature which administers the Whole and, granted this, the lower are in the interests of the higher, the higher for one another. (11,18,2, trans. Farquharson) [T9]

All four texts clearly discuss the same topic, i.e. the structure of the universe. In all of them Marcus presents and discusses two alternatives: the universe has a well ordered and rational structure *or* the universe is made of atoms and lacks unity and organization. This alternative is one of the most discussed topics of the *Meditations* and scholars have not yet agreed on whether the atoms-alternative is mere a dialectical hypothesis that Marcus compares to the theory he endorses or he really takes the possibility into account that this epicurean-looking opinion may be true (see e.g. Annas (2004) and Cooper (2004)). From the stylistic perspective, we will note that in [T6] Marcus simply discusses the issue as a reflection on that precise alternative. Besides, if one accepts the Greek text as it is preserved in the testimonies and agrees with Theiler's deletion of *men*, one can say that Marcus explicitly states his preference for the order-hypothesis. In [T7] the alternative is presented without the choice between both hypotheses. On the other hand, the concrete, descriptive attitude of [T6] disappears, at least in the presentation of the order-hypothesis, which is this time described in strongly metaphorical terms ('fountain of mind', universe as a 'single, organic body'). In [T8] the alternative is presented according to the technique of [T6–7]. But in this case the physical issue is strongly connected with Marcus' individual perspective, inasmuch as he asks what the 'behavioral' consequences of each of the alternatives will be. Not surprisingly, here the style is – by means of rhetorical questions – much more lively and in accordance with the exhortative and dialectical way in which Marcus challenges himself throughout the work. In [T9], eventually, the argument is given in a very synthetic form and is even more deeply embedded in other topics, in particular in the question how the relationships between inanimate, animate, and rational beings has to be conceived if one accepts that the world has a rational order; additionally, this perspective is in close connection with the question of how Marcus has to express his social role as a leader, which has already been the topic of [T8].

After having illustrated this specific example, I will now list the ways in which, more generally, a subject *a* may appear within the *Meditations* according to this variation technique:

- (i) *a* may be expressed in a *concise, purely descriptive* way (for instance: 'man is a social being');
- (ii) *a* may be embedded in an *axiological* and *moral* perspective ('it is right/beautiful for man to be a social being', 'it is bad for man not to be a social being');
- (iii) *a* may be integrated in the *exhortative* procedures that permeate the entire work ('be a social being!' or, as we have seen, 'stop being an antisocial man!'): this shift implies that *a* is personalized and that the perspective is focused on Marcus as an individual man;

- (iv) *a* may be integrated into the *educational*, Socratic attitude that is connected with (iii) ('you need to know that you are a social being!' or 'tell yourself that you are a social being!');
- (v) *a* may not be considered as a fully accepted point and is therefore thoroughly demonstrated with a more or less cogent and linear argument ('everything tends to the similar, starting from the inanimate elements – all watery, for instance, flows together – and the irrational creatures – bees or ants, for instance; rational beings tend to consociation too, or even more than the other beings; you too, as a man, need to tend to your fellow men; therefore you need to constantly express yourself as a social being'; this is basically the argument of 9,9);
- (vi) *a* may be enriched with corollaries or adjacent observations ('man is a social being; so, even if your fellow men act wrongly, you should not lose your affection for them'; see 7,22; for other forms of thematic ramification, see [T8–9]).

I observed that this complex procedure is the result of Marcus' rhetorical skill (for an extensive literary analysis of this procedure with further case studies, see Rutherford (1989) 126–77). But it needs to be emphasized that it also has philosophical importance. In particular, it allows a correct highlighting of the originality and the complexity of Marcus' philosophical undertaking: with the *Meditations* he does not simply collect a series of maxims, but he expresses a broader philosophical challenge, which is both rhetorically and dialectically effective. If we consider the *Meditations* – as we stated above – a dialogue of two interlocutors who coincide in the same person (Marcus), we shall say now that the interlocutor, who possesses the knowledge that has to be internalized through repetition and the series of right habits the other interlocutor has got to adjust to, does not only *transmit* that knowledge and those habits, but also *describes them* (i), *justifies them morally* (ii), and, even more important, *demonstrates them* (iii), respecting the 'other self' as a rational interlocutor. The self-exhortation staged in the *Meditations* is therefore not mere parenesis, but implies an effort to understand and to critically agree with the doctrines one has to adjust to.

APPENDIX: BOOK 1

Even if one does not want to find thematically homogeneous sections within one single book (or groups of books) of the *Meditations* or to see correspondences between books and specific subjects (like Braune (1878) 12–52 and Loisel (1926) and (1928) who tried to re-organize the entire text according to subject-matters), the fact that all books of the *Meditations* share a common pattern remains incontrovertible: each of them

contains a certain number of chapters of different lengths, discussing various topics with changing rhetorical strategies. Within this pattern there is an important exception, both thematic and stylistic: Book 1. This book – which has definitely been the most successful among scholars (who paid particular attention to its relative chronology, to its style, and to the possible literary influences; see in particular Martinazzoli (1951); Dalfen (1967) 4–33, who bases his analysis on the comparison with Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* Book 1; Kurzová (1976); Rutherford (1989) 48–125; Mangano (1990); Dalfen (2000) and, more recently, Reydam-Schils (2005) 79 and Giavatto (2008) 140–47) – is characterized by a substantial unity. On the thematic level, unity is given by the fact that in each of the 17 chapters Marcus refers to one of the most significant characters of his biography. The fact that chapter 17 refers to the gods should not be seen as an exception since the book follows a sort of prosopographical climax starting from family members over teachers ending with the adoptive father in ch. 16 (from this viewpoint Book 1 is also an exception inasmuch as in the rest of the *Meditations* there is a paucity of autobiographical references). On the purely stylistic level this book is homogeneous since every chapter follows a precise pattern that can be schematized in the following way:

$$\pi + P [+v] + A$$

Namely: (π) *para* ('from'; on the use of this preposition in the *Meditations* see Spohr (1890) 44) + (P) name of a person [+ (V) implied verb] + (A) accusative of a substantive indicating an attitude, of substantiated infinitives or even broader expressions. For what concerns A, since most terms are neutral, one has to wait until *tên ennoian* ('the notion') of 1,9,2 to be certain that all terms are accusatives (see Farquharson (1944) 434–35, *ad* 1,1); the nominative *hê koinonoêmosunê* ('the regard for others') of 1,16,8 must be interpreted as a *constructio ad sensum* or as an oversight, which is not surprising for a chapter like 1,16, since it is one of the less polished passages of the *Meditations*. Two examples will show the functioning of this pattern:

From my Grandfather Verus, a kindly disposition and sweetness of temper. (1,1, trans. Haines) [T10]

From Fronto, to note the envy, the subtlety, and the dissimulation which are habitual to a tyrant etc. (1,11, trans. Haines) [T11]

Some translators tend to express the implied verb – see e.g. Cortassa, 'ho creditato'; interestingly, by quoting 1,6 the *Suda* (α 830 A.) adds *emathōn*, 'I learned', after 'From Diognetus' – but it is certainly more correct to respect the ambiguity given by the absence of a verb, as e.g. Farquharson, Haines, or Hadot and Luna do: the virtues, the attitudes, and the behaviors listed in 'A' imply from time to time the different ideas of 'inheriting them from *x*', 'observing them in *y*', 'admiring them in *w*', and 'learn them from *z*' (see Hadot and Luna (1998) LXI and Dürr (1938) 73).

The spirit and therefore the structure of this book seem to become clearer through 6,48,1–2:

Whenever you desire to cheer yourself, think upon the merits of those who are alive with you; the energy of one, for instance, the modesty of another, the generosity of a third, of another some other gift. For nothing is so cheering as the images of the virtues shining in the character of contemporaries, and meeting so far as possible in a group. (trans. Farquharson) [T12]

This text certainly gives hints about the spirit of the first book of the *Meditations*, although it may not be considered exhaustive. The aim of Book 1, in particular, is not just to cheer Marcus up (*euphrainein*; see also 7,13,3 and 8,43), but generally to serve as an introduction to the whole writing and to remind himself of the gifts life gave him in the form of virtuous inter-human relationships.

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CHAPTER 22

Aspects of Orality in (the Text of) the *Meditations*

Michael Erler

The ‘Self-observations’ of Marcus Aurelius represent a peculiarity in philosophical literature (Dalfen (1967)). They feature a collection of different sections which is mostly in aphoristic form, and aims not so much at developing philosophical theories, nor at solving philosophical problems, nor at teaching fundamental issues, nor even at grasping the rules of a given sphere of action (Erler (1998)). Apparently, Marcus Aurelius is more interested in providing the reader with the finished results of philosophical meditations, and with methods that make these results be part of his spiritual habitus by converting them into his life praxis. The purpose of reading is the care of the reader’s soul. This care should help in making the contents of teaching become a steady part of human personality, and therefore a guideline for action. Marcus aims at a reader who considers himself as a philosophical pupil, as a *prokopton* (Roskam (2005)), insofar as he pursues his own moral perfection. Marcus is outlining an educational program when he invites ‘not any more to discuss at large about the essence of a good man, but to be one’ (*Meditations* 10, 16). This aim has to be pursued through the correct choice of exterior goods, the adequate evaluation of irritating circumstances, the internalization of therapeutic methods (2, 7; 3, 6), the meditations on prescriptions based on protreptic contents, the ‘instructions for use’, and, last but not least, the sample-cases listed in the text, which show how to put in practice such instructions. To begin with, Marcus is not caring about the soul of unknown people, but about his own inner being and self-examination: ‘look to what is within: do not allow the intrinsic quality or the worth of any one fact to escape

you' (6, 3, trans. Farquharson; see also 5, 11). Remembrance, reflection, and renewal are important features of his self-examination. Welcome is not a reading which aims at mere entertainment or indoctrination, but that which is useful for getting prepared for one's own life. These being the intentions of Marcus, his *Meditations* align themselves with a tradition of therapeutic writings whose purpose is to contribute to the philosophical indoctrination of the reader, and to convert philosophical theory into practice. This entails that in his writings Marcus is indeed helping the reader to help himself. For his text reflects those 'spiritual exercises' – *exercices spirituels* (Hadot (1991) 51–68) – that find practical application in the oral guidance of souls, while at the same time becoming literary in philosophical texts of different provenience, such as Lucretius' poem *De rerum natura*, Epictetus' *Dissertationes*, Seneca's dialogues and letters, or some passages of Diogenes of Oinoanda's monumental Epicurean inscription (Rabbow (1954) 126f.). But within this tradition Marcus' *Meditations* are peculiar, since they contain such passages right in the middle of the work. Moreover, his therapy of the soul focuses primarily on the interior and the self of the author, that is on Marcus' own moral progress. However, even for these peculiarities he can rely on a tradition: their background is in fact that of Plato's Socrates, who understands philosophy as the care for the soul of others, and in some cases even demonstrates that such care includes the care for one's own soul. This happens for instance in two passages of the *Symposium*: when Socrates behaves as if he were involved in a self-conversation, and wants to think things through to the end before he joins his friends and their conversations; or when the lack of a real partner makes him figure out a fictitious one and stress that for him thought is equal to a conversation of the soul with itself (Plato, *Conv.* 174de; cf. Szlezák (1993) 137f.; Gill (1996)). Since in the text Marcus refers often to himself, there are passages which may indeed appear relevant only to the author. This background could also be helpful in explaining some unclear statements (Brunt (1974); Roskam (2005) 126). Terminological and methodological matters often remain vague, some sections are extremely short, and at first glance it does not seem that the author had any intention of composing a structured work. In his 'self-conversations' Marcus appears to be an eclectic, as he borrows from various schools as Stoicism, Epicureanism, and even Platonism (*Meditations* 11, 18, 10; cf. Roskam (2005) 134 and Gill (2007)). Also the literary traditions he refers to are manifold: parainesis, gnomic, and the father's education of a son (cf. e.g. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, on which Dalfen (1967)). In spite of such a variety, the will to compose a structured work is evident. Thus the issues Marcus Aurelius treats in Book 1 on the occasion of his thanksgiving to the teachers, the friends, and the sponsors are unfolded in Books 2–12. Of course, these literary aspects are also of secondary importance if compared to the practical intention of the author.

However, in Marcus it is possible to recognize not only manifold literary models. In fact, his arguments include plenty of elements that are closely connected with the oral tradition of philosophical teaching. The latter requires first of all elenctic self-conversation, a feature he describes as structural, but also some of the methods he follows when applying such an enquiry (Newman (1989)). By integrating these oral features in his philosophical accounts, he stands admittedly in a tradition to which pertain not only Plato's Socratic dialogue, but also Aristotle's esoteric works, and foremost the texts originating from Hellenistic philosophy. A glance at this tradition can reveal the parallels and peculiarities we find in Marcus. Let us therefore have a brief look at some elements of orality featured in the philosophical texts before Marcus.

1. Oral Features in the Philosophical Texts before Marcus

1.1. *Plato*

In his dialogues Plato founded the literary conversation with the aim of establishing philosophical praxis not in an abstract, but in a realistic way (Erler (2007) 60f.). Since according to Plato philosophy and search for truth can be accomplished successfully only within oral discourse, in his open-ended philosophical dialogues he presents in realistically arranged milieux various forms of oral communication, such as the debate, the dialectic search for truth, the self-conversation, or the elenctic conversation. A peculiar feature of these dialogues is that they do not transmit knowledge in a magistral manner; rather, they show ways of acquiring insight and stimulating the recipient to think on his own. This entails Plato's dialogues developing forms and features of oral discourses, achieving the greatest possible proximity to the oral process which leads to the acquisition of insight. When these forms of philosophical orality are displayed, the result is less important than tracing back the way leading to insight, viz. to error. For according to Plato learning and teaching take place not through simply pouring out established wisdom and receiving already obtained results, that is not just by 'dyeing' (this is the derogatory term Plato applies to pure mechanical learning), but through an active understanding of the learning process (Plato, *Republic* 430c; Erler (2003)). In fact, Plato also encourages exercise and reiteration. But what is important to him is the autonomous search for truth and the quality of knowledge that has to be acquired through dyeing, that is through making knowledge more 'steady', and therefore more 'valuable', thanks to its consolidation in a dialectical conversation in which exercise and guidance are also at stake (Plato, *Meno* 77a, 75a).

With his dialogues Plato opens up a space of ideal orality. He enriches it with special forms of oral communication, such as the self-conversation or the conversation with fictitious partners – indeed a welcome means of self-conviction and exercise among the Socratics (Hadot (1991) 25). Here the processes leading to the acquisition of knowledge are presented, the result of which can turn into steady insight only through repetition. In the subsequent tradition these processes became exercises on their own, as can be noted in various authors – including Marcus Aurelius. In the process leading to the acquisition of knowledge texts play an important role which is however secondary. Texts should not serve as a mnemonic means for learning finished dogmas. Instead, they support the active acquisition and securization of knowledge as they themselves are not a help, but expect it from the interpreter (Plato, *Phaedrus* 276e). The features of orality in Plato's dialogues are therefore fictitious and mimetic, as they imitate oral communication without pretending or wanting to substitute oral communication. This entails that the mimetic orality of the dialogues does not eliminate the fundamental deficiencies of written texts acknowledged by Plato. Since the mimetic orality shaped by Plato in his dialogues is a sort of appeal to the reader, he maintains that the dialogues can be used as an aid for completing the oral process of acquiring insight, thus becoming an instrument for exercise (Erler (1987b) 280f.).

1.2. Aristotle

Features of an 'oral style' can be observed also in various passages of Aristotle's work. Aristotle strives towards an oral style not only in the written presentation of philosophy in his dialogues, but also in his esoteric works. What we find here are not so much 'residues of oral discourses' (Dirlmeier (1962) 17), but the result of a literary effort and methodological considerations (Föllinger (1993) 280). Quite like Plato, albeit with a different intensity, Aristotle stresses the processual character of the acquisition of insight. While doing so, Aristotle is at times guided by a dialectical method, which he displays for instance in the *Topic* (*Sophistici elenchi* 183a7–37; cf. Lengen (2002)). Professional knowledge can therefore be established by disseminating experiences in a given field of activity, either through a practical exercise which takes place in a master–pupil relationship, or through a theoretical indoctrination on the fundamentals of an activity. Fundamentals are a way of acquiring knowledge which should be related to the dialectical method propagated and practiced by Aristotle. This consists in a formalized question–answer procedure leading to refutation, which should be internalized by the reader or listener. The latter should transform such a procedure in a sort of 'interior dialogue' which aims at examining one's own theses and at making the train of thought transparent,

and thus at conferring reliability and legitimation to the thesis (*De caelo* 1, 10, 279b7–9; cf. Föllinger (1993) 266f.).

This was Aristotle's aim not only in the dialogues he wrote for a larger public, which have been preserved only in a fragmentary form, but also in the specialized treaties destined to a more restricted public. The fragments of the dialogues show that these writings differ from Plato's, e.g., because they contain long speeches in which Aristotle fulfills the function of a teacher. This entails a systematic representation of specialized knowledge, but emphasizes the subordinate position of the respective interlocutor (Föllinger (2006) 468).

The specialized treaties are manuscripts of lectures that aim at involving the destinatory through either speeches or readings (Flashar (2004) 179f.). Aristotle's wish to express the processual character of insight is particularly evident in the esoteric works. In several passages it can be observed that Aristotle urges the reader to understand and reproduce the train of thoughts he espouses as if it were a conversation with an imaginary interlocutor. However, the dialectical orality exhibited by Aristotle differs from Plato's because it does not bring about a mimetic dialogue, but it postulates an imaginary interlocutor who follows the dialogical train of thoughts. Aristotle's orality is therefore 'imaginary' (Föllinger (1993) 263f.) and not mimetic, as in Plato. Through its processual character it enables the reader or listener of the esoteric works to transmit the results obtained. However, some passages are occasionally influenced by a will to achieve a literary whole (e.g. *Metaphysics* 12, 9, 1074b15–29). When Aristotle presents dialectical reasoning in a written form, he is however guided by a contemplative intention. He wants to emphasize the processual character of the acquisition of insight and thus enhance the dissemination of its results. But he wants also to make them plausible, e.g., when different opinions have to be tackled in order to prepare the ground for correct insights. Sometimes the representation of a particular train of thought becomes the mirror of the interior dialogue of the author. In this case the author ascribes to himself different roles (*De caelo* 1, 10, 279b7–9; cf. Föllinger (1993) 266 and 268), and aims at being transformed into an interior dialogue of the reader, who in turn will adduce pros and cons, and weigh them against each other (*Topics* 163b9–12). Such passages showing a hidden orality of the texts become a sort of appeal to the reader, as they enable him to follow the process of their development. Despite all the differences in single issues, the integration of oral features in the writings of Plato and Aristotle reflects the will to emphasize the processual character of the acquisition of knowledge. In fact, this is the only way a plausible result and a proper acquisition of knowledge can ensue, the latter being possible only by participating in, and reconsidering, the processual character of insight. A fundamental importance goes in this respect to a higher evaluation of the cognitive process, which is an essential component of the acquisition of insight.

2. 'Silently Chewing Words in Self-Conversation' (Persius)

When dealing with the integration of oral elements in philosophical texts, both Plato and Aristotle stress the processual character of the acquisition of knowledge. This changes in Hellenism and in the literature influenced by Hellenistic philosophy, up to the early Imperial Age, where oral elements are integrated. It is however significant that these elements obtain a different function, as can be noticed for example in Marcus' *Meditations*.

In Hellenism, philosophy becomes an ever more specialist knowledge, to be used for a successful life. Its aim is to transmit sound knowledge (Dihle (1986)). Also here the issue is that of searching for truth and *eudaimonia*, but first and foremost of making insight fruitful for reaching happiness. It is not so much about the process of acquiring insight, but about providing the recipient with handouts that contain an insight ready for use and serve him as a guide for getting oriented in life. The philosophical schools of Hellenism, mostly oriented toward practical and ethical issues, deem important not only the legitimation of this insight. They wish that such insight will not just be consumed passively by the recipient, but used as a guide for actively pursuing happiness in the future (Erler (1987b) 60f.). What was secondary for Plato becomes now primary, that is the mechanical acquisition and incorporation of consolidated results deriving from the process of insight. For in Hellenism the automatism propagated by Socrates and Plato, according to which correct knowledge can be transformed into action, becomes a problem. Since Marcus Aurelius considers himself as belonging to the tradition of these Hellenistic schools, such a displacement of the framework conditions is of great importance for understanding his *Meditations*.

This work aims at bringing about an attitude that converts knowledge into a steady component of the agent, which he can use in any possible situation. Let us recall an image used by Seneca and Marcus Aurelius (Seneca, *Epistulae* 71, 31; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 5, 16) which we find already in Plato, albeit in a derogatory context (Plato, *Republic* 430ab): the idea is that of 'dyeing' the recipient with wisdom or specific notions, as dye can become a steady component only through constant repetition. In this dyeing process texts play an important role, for they provide the reader not only with teaching content, but also with rules and guidelines for a practical application of that content. This entails that they help the reader by illustrating exemplary exercises taken from the oral sphere, and that their reference to life praxis converts the presented reflection into a meditation. In fact, exercise is indispensable if one wants not only to have ready the knowledge necessary for a happy life, but also to apply it in challenging situations. Even in this context features of orality can be found, albeit with a

slightly different function. Here the issue is no longer that of a pure mimesis or a fictitious orality; in the Hellenistic texts the aspect of appeal and functioning becomes rather primary. Presentations of oral reflections and discussions with others or oneself show not only a correct application of knowledge, but become actual instructions for a practical implementation of teaching content in specific situations of life.

This applies for the Epicureans, but also for the Hellenistic authors taken as a whole, and especially for Marcus Aurelius. An example which also characterizes Marcus – although the context is that of Epicureanism – can be found in the major Epicurean inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda which goes back to the second century AD, that is to a period not very distant from Marcus Aurelius. Here we read (Diogenes of Oinoanda 74, 2f. Smith) a small soliloquy about the fact that it is human to suffer affections, but that some of the affections are natural and easily defined. For it is evident that some passions are natural, i.e. acceptable, while some others are not. These reflections also may be considered as an offer to the reader, and as a help to him in awkward situations. For in general the author wants to offer to the wanderer passing by an explicit help or a medicine he has tested personally (fr. 3, 4, 5 Smith; cf. fr. 3, 5, 7f.). Differently from Plato, where help in understanding the text is expected from the reader, the Hellenistic text provides help to the reader. Indeed, this kind of help aims at helping oneself to conduct a correct life. For this purpose, continuous exercise and clearly outlined theorems are needed (cf. Epicurus, *Epistula ad Herodotum* 35, *Epistula ad Pythoclem* 84f.).

However, doctrine becomes a real help for life only through a correct application of knowledge in a specific situation. This is exactly what the self-conversation recorded in the inscription aims at, since the general formulation ‘such and such a thing’ (*tónde kai tónde*) enables the reader to tackle whatever issue troubles him at the moment, and to verify its conformity to nature. Apparently the author is concerned not about the reader’s dialogue with the text, nor with a mere presentation of a therapeutic self-conversation. The self-conversation recorded in writing provides a model of thought that should be transformed by the reader into an oral practice which aims at the right way of living.

What Diogenes of Oinoanda provides and pretends had already been illustrated by Horace in his *Iter Brundisinum* (Horace, *Sermones* 1, 5, 97f.). Faced with the irritating claim that in Gnatia the sacrifices are burning without fires, he does not get upset. He recalls the Epicurean ideal of the *nil mirari* referring to verses of Lucretius:

Let any superstitious Jew think so, but I could not, for I know now from Epicurus that the gods pass their time free from care, and that it is no threatening rage of theirs that sends down from the heaven’s lofty dome whatever natural phenomenon we see. (trans. Millington (1869))

He then puts aside his irritation by quoting a verse of Lucretius' *De rerum natura* as if it were a maxim and an apotropaic weapon. Finally, Horace realizes that one should not ascribe to the gods unusual events (*Sermones* 1, 5, 101f.; cf. Lucretius 5, 101). This small scene shows what is meant by transmission of philosophical knowledge in Hellenistic philosophical schools, and which role the texts play in this process. Being part of an oral self-aid, they should help in making philosophy practical. During the Imperial Age this practice of oral 'dyeing' was considered to be a characteristic feature of the philosophers, and was parodied e.g. by Persius, in his *Satires* (Persius 3, 78f., on which Kießel (1990) 462f.):

What I know's enough for me. I don't fancy being a miserable old Solon or Arcesilas – bent head, eyes fixing the ground, all on your own munching mumbles and dumb delusion, pouting a lip for weighing your words and brooding on the fantasies of some old invalid. 'From nothing nothing comes; returns to nothing nothing.' (trans. Jenkinson (1980))

Silently chewing words in self-conversation: in spite of all the parody, we get here a clear perception of what Diogenes wants to endorse in his inscription, and of what we find also in other philosophical literature of the Imperial Age, notably in Marcus. There were different forms of 'dyeing', especially when it came to an oral reflection on important doctrinal elements. Epictetus' *Dissertations*, for instance, exhibit at the same time the dogmatics, the method, and the illustration of their application in everyday life. Precisely because of their exemplary character, they should be understood as an appeal for the self-accomplishment of philosophy. For according to Epictetus the purpose of philosophical authorship consists in reaching the right way of living through a constant examination of one's own and others' opinions. Like Epicurus, Epictetus aims at thinking over the fundamentals of his philosophy day and night in order to have them handy. This can happen through reading, writing, or conversing on them, either with others or with oneself. By the frequent reiteration of the question: 'Can you help me with this question?' (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 7, 7; cf. Wehner (2000); Long (2002) 82f.), the *Dissertations* show how a philosophical discourse can serve as a help for life both in its oral and written form. The methodological basis is the so-called *Kanon* (Epictetus, *Dissertations* 4, 4, 29; 4, 29, 2–3), a standard question one should always have ready:

Keep in mind the general principles: What belongs to me?; What does not belong to me?; What is given to me?; What does God want me to do in this moment, and what not?

Epictetus expects one to practice this sort of self-conversation first in oral and written form, then to move on to their practical application. According

to Epictetus, reading of books only for entertainment or erudition is therefore useless. Every reading should rather serve as a preparation and means for leading a good life. Texts should help to take the right decisions in particular situations by applying general principles. Epictetus stresses that this should however not happen through a mere collection of dogmatic evidence, but by giving the reader the chance to test himself and others orally (Epictetus, *Dissertations* 1, 1, 1–25; cf. 2, 1, 29f.; 4, 4, 4; 4, 4, 11; 4, 4, 29f.; 4, 4, 16; cf. Hershbell (1989)).

The meditative features of Epictetus' *Dissertations* reflect therefore oral philosophical practice: they are specimens acquired through school training and formulated for further use. They serve not only to illustrate an exemplary behavior, and should be understood not just as the *topoi* of the diatribes' style; on the contrary, they provide a practical solution for converting doctrine into life, as their aim is to enhance the peace of the soul. The *Dissertations* represent therefore a reservoir of paradigmatic dialogical situations; with their help, the reader should calm down every time he faces irritating situations, as shown for instance in the *Enchiridion*:

Disease hinders the body, but not the moral decision – if the decision itself doesn't allow it. Paralysis hinders the leg, but not the moral decision. Say this whenever something occurs to you. (Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 9)

These statements demonstrate the close connection linking the orality featured in the text to the oral attitude expected from the reader. Related meditative elements are the maxim, the exemplum, and the prayer. Even the prayer becomes part of an exercise meant to provide orientation for life and to protect against irritations (Epictetus, *Dissertations* 3, 24, 9; cf. *Enchiridion* 53, on which Erler (1987a)). The *Dissertations*, sketched and partially shaped into a literary form by Arrian, turn out to be a reservoir of invitations to meditation originating from the oral sphere and recorded for oral use.

It is interesting that Epictetus justifies his philosophical authorship by referring to his great model, Socrates. Epictetus' strange claim is that the latter wrote so much because he was always busy in examining his own opinions (Epictetus, *Dissertations* 2, 1, 32, on which Wehner (2000) 84). Since for these test-conversations partners were not always available, he wrote down maxims or problems for others and himself so as to have them handy at any time, and to create the distance necessary for self-examination. Only for this reason would a philosopher write books: to always have handy everything he needs for daily exercise and mastering irritating situations. A text is therefore a means for testing others and oneself, and thus a help for both the reader and the author. Socrates, the master of the oral search for truth, becomes a self-therapist of the Imperial Age, who in his therapy seeks help from the texts.

3. Marcus Aurelius. A Writing Socrates?

Writing is therefore a therapy of one's own self (Dalfen (2000)). This statement, together with the traditional close relationship between the oral elements serving the acquisition of knowledge and the fundamentals of philosophical teaching, should be kept in mind when examining the oral features of Marcus' *Meditations*. For in Marcus these meditative features become not only part of literature, but also a separate species in which the elements of oral indoctrination are almost constitutive. This happens at the end of an epoch in which the dominant idea of philosophy is to solve the mundane problems of mankind, as is evident in the Hellenistic schools, especially in the Stoa and the Kepos. Just like the Epicureans, Marcus Aurelius invites his readers to feel disturbed by the phenomena. He deems ridiculous those who are surprised by the events of the world (*Meditations* 12, 13; cf. Rutherford (1989) 26f.; Dalfen (1980)). As Diogenes of Oinoanda, he believes that people are befallen by a 'pest of irrationality' which leads them to a false evaluation of things. As an antidote for unveiling erroneous opinions and converting philosophy into a right way of living, he undergoes spiritual exercises for which he helps himself with written media (*Meditations* 3, 11; 9, 2; 9, 3).

Following Marcus' own words, he came to know Epictetus' *Diatribes* through Rusticus; some of Marcus' features can in fact be compared with those we can find in Epictetus (*Meditations* 1, 7, on which Hadot (1997)). With the numerous exercises he records, Marcus stands indeed in the tradition of the 'spiritual exercises' we find also in Epictetus or Lucretius. This holds also for the intention and the appeals for a spiritual renovation he connects with his notes and the oral elements of his self-reflections. Unlike in Lucretius, Seneca, or Epictetus, Marcus' appeal is directed primarily to himself. Just like Epictetus, however, Marcus also wants to provide material for others, in order to put his ideas to the test without interlocutors. His self-reflections can therefore be considered as a thesaurus of exercises which were originally oral, but have then been fixed in a written text that in particular circumstances the author can make effective in oral form. In the 12 books of the *Meditations* it is possible to find numerous model-conversations, mostly in the first person, that by no means all belong to Marcus, but have been preformulated for him by his teachers (Dalfen (1967) 204f.). They are exemplary self-conversations which Marcus could use in particular situations, and which recall very similar guidelines we have already seen in Diogenes' large inscription. Moreover, Marcus recorded maxims, literary quotations, and general thoughts related to methodological indications, such as the recommendation to keep ready for use short and simple fundamental sentences in order to eliminate every pain and keep free from any anger induced by daily duties. The scope of this 'withdrawal in oneself', as

Marcus calls it, is the constant ‘renewal of the self’: Marcus urges to ‘build yourself up, make yourself young’ (*Meditations* 4, 3, 3). Even for this we can find earlier examples, i.e. in Horace, who also hopes to find some ‘edification’ (*recreare*) in reading his philosophical *libella* (Horace, *Epistulae* 1, 1, 2). According to Marcus, a short poetical quotation can be sufficient to remember what freedom from pain and fear is, or to warn against extreme ambitions: he illustrates this by a verse of Homer. Quite significantly, for these methods Marcus refers to the Epicureans (*Meditations* 7, 64). He is guided by Epicurean practice, e.g., in his overt use of *exempla*. We can observe this in the 1st Book, where he introduces people who played a decisive role in enhancing his spiritual development. In fact, this passage deals not only with the presentation of models, but also with a psychagogic effect connecting Roman tradition with Greek theory (cf. *Meditations* 7, 64 and 10, 34 with Homer, *Iliad* 6, 147f.). ‘Indeed, nothing causes so much joy as the different ways the virtues appear, possibly concentrated in great number, in the character of the contemporaries. For this reason, one must always have them handy’ (*Meditations* 6, 48). ‘Have them handy’ – this is the key expression for the duty fulfilled by the *exempla* occurring in Book 1, but also for the arguments borrowed from orality of the subsequent 11 books. With the help of necessary principles Marcus hopes to avoid the irritating situations that occur in the world. By means of logical devices Marcus manages to give statements on nature and mankind, but he also uses literary motifs such as catalogues, and converts them into invitations to oral meditation. Again, the mind goes to parallel passages in Lucretius, with whom Marcus was familiar thanks to the readings he did with his teacher Fronto. This recalls Lucretius’ catalogue-like hint at the death of important philosophers and politicians, which serves to keep one always aware of the nullity of death; it is also possible to refer to the variety of Lucretius’ arguments, all aimed at demonstrating the mortality of the soul. In all of these cases, the reader is asked to make a choice between a variety of arguments. He is also charged with some tasks. After having been provided with a series of given examples and practiced models, the reader is invited to perform his own *exercitium*, to find further arguments, and to develop his own hypotheses. Some rhetorical means are thereby introduced, and the Epicurean method plays a role as well, as Lucretius takes great advantage of the fact that this method is connected to, and encourages, further exercise (Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 5, 1281f.; cf. *Meditations* 5, 16; 7, 2). This holds in fact for the catalogue of the ‘mortality proofs’ included in the 3rd Book, which demonstrates that death is insignificant, and it holds as well for the catalogue of the faded great politicians and philosophers, which should support this thesis. The latter concerns of course the traditional consolatory topos *non tibi soli*. Looking back to Diogenes, the task of Epicurean philosophy becomes clear when Lucretius introduces the

section by the statement that ‘sometimes you could say to yourself even these words’ (Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 3, 1024). We are here facing a literary topos with an oral background. Lucretius connects it to the specific invitation to make use of the presented catalogue of consolation in a given situation. It is noteworthy that in Marcus’ work such catalogue-like sections can be found in different passages (*Meditations* 3, 3; 4, 48; 6, 47). To reach a correct evaluation of the phenomena Marcus does not make use of Epictetus’ standard question ‘is the issue in my power or not?’ Instead, he is eager to refer to the natural condition of the phenomena so as to refrain from false opinions on things. In this way, he strives to strip from them any illusory meaning. Reducing the illusory phenomena to the basic facts of the continuous change in nature, and disregarding all the transitory things, is according to Marcus the way to avoid erroneous judgments and enhance tranquility. Physiology, and the correct consideration of the nature’s processes, are for him a therapeutical means (*Meditations* 5, 33; 6, 13; 6, 14; 9, 29; 10, 9, on which Rabbow (1954) and Nussbaum (1994) 140f.). For anything irritating one may meet, one should find a definition, or form a concept, so that the essence of the phenomenon is unveiled, and it is possible to tell both its name and that of its parts. Marcus suggests:

Always make a figure or outline of the imagined object as it occurs, in order to see distinctly what it is in its essence, naked, as a whole and parts; and say to yourself its individual name and the names of the things of which it was compounded and into which it will be broken up. For nothing is so able to create greatness of mind as the power methodically and truthfully to test each thing that meets one in life. (*Meditations* 3, 11, trans. Farquharson; cf. Hadot (1991) 91f.)

The expression ‘say to yourself its individual name’ shows the oral character of the meditative exercise suggested, which Marcus cites and illustrates over and over in the *Meditations*, and which follows the self-discipline Epictetus also suggests again and again (Hijmans (1959); Newman (1989)). This reduction of the phenomena to their true physiological background forms the core of Marcus’ self-therapeutic method, which he repeats like a breviary so as to correctly evaluate the corresponding phenomena. For only through a correct evaluation of the phenomena he deems to eliminate both the irritation and the ‘pest’ in thought. It is always a matter of determining phenomena in their essence. Marcus is led by the principle of getting used to everything, even if unpleasant. ‘Get used also to those things you cannot acknowledge.’ In this case one must

ask from where everything originated and out of what substance it is composed, in what it transforms, how it will become after it will be transformed, and how it

can be protected not to suffer something still worse. (*Meditations* 9, 2, 3; 12, 6; cf. Hadot (1991) 122 and Rutherford (1989) 143–46)

Exactly this search for the correct evaluations or ‘definitions’ leads often to drastic descriptions of single phenomena, which in most cases irritate or bring anxiety to people. Titbits become fish corpses, Falerno wine becomes grape juice, a purple robe becomes sheep-wool impregnated in snail blood (*Meditations* 11, 17; cf. 4, 48; 6, 24; 9, 38). Also here the name of Epicurus is quoted, and not by chance. His similarly drastic description, e.g. of love, recalls the *Diatribes* against love occurring at the end of the Fourth Book of Lucretius’ *De rerum natura* (*Meditations* 9, 41; cf. Erler (2003)). Lucretius’ treatise is the conclusion and highlight of the main argument discussed in the Fourth Book, which deals with the images (*simulacra*), their function in perception, the danger of deception they bring about, and their correct evaluation. For also in the act of love and in the analysis of sexual desire the images (*simulacra*) play an important role. Lucretius sees in love an interpretation which is mostly false, being related to the experience of sexual feelings. According to him passion of love should be criticized, as it makes pure pleasure (*voluptas*) almost impossible. His attack on a false idea of the passion of love derives from a physiological interpretation of sexual desire. It starts with a drastic reduction of love to a physiological procedure, that is to a mechanical process of seeing and ejaculating which leaves aside every individual feature. This representation of love and its reduction to physical processes ends up in the following consideration: ‘This is our Venus; from here comes the word “love”’, where the assonance of the words ‘amor’ and ‘umor’, namely humidity, may play a role (Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 1058). This reduction of love to a pure physiological process has induced some interpreters to consider him a misogynist. However, these scholars miss that this reduction is only part of a general therapeutic concept which is identical to that observed in Marcus. In fact, the definition of love on a physiological basis he gives in his verses contains only a sketchy description of the psychological effects of love. The section dwelling on ‘definition’ is followed by an account of the passion’s consequences featuring the negative consequences arising from actions based on erroneous opinions about the passion of love. Drawbacks are described, illusions and wrong behavior relying on a wrong evaluation of passion, as well as the drawbacks arising from a sentimental view of love, i.e. the loss of richness, freedom, and reputation. In short, in Lucretius we observe the same procedure we have in Marcus: what is generally appreciated is unveiled and reduced to its fundamentals. This procedure, which also derives from the sphere of orality, is applied in the conviction that it leads to the desired condition of generosity (*megalofrosúnh*) or *magnitudo animi*, since it allows to stand above everything. Also in this case the issue is not that of a scientific analysis, but of converting insight into a way of

living. In Marcus similar passages contributed to consolidating the image of the pessimistic emperor, since their meditative character was ignored (*Meditations* 4, 3, 5; cf. Erler (2012) and Hadot (1991) 45). Marcus, who never defines himself as a Stoic, but often considered the atomistic explanation of reality as a possible alternative, makes use of oral meditative methods deriving from different schools. He aims at evaluating correctly the appearances, at making irritations disappear, and at eradicating the ‘pest’ in thought. Also for Marcus, recording in writing serves to shape behavior and the conduct of life. The written representation requires features of imagined as well as mimetic orality, and this not just for an illustration of the processes leading to insight, nor for a mere rhetoric legitimization of insights. Rather, Marcus provides material for a ‘chewing of words’ which is meant to facilitate the habitualization of knowledge and to bring about an attitude immune to any irritation. Just like Epictetus’ Socrates, Marcus records in writing elements of oral self-therapy in order to have them handy on any occasion, and to let them become a new part of an oral self-therapy.

It has been shown that the dialogical features of Marcus’ *Meditations* are not just written illustrations of theoretical representations of what Marcus understands as a ‘self-dialogue’. They are rather models and aids for realizing the reader’s self-education, as they urge him to re-perform these models orally. This entails that the *Meditations* do not let the reader become just a witness of the author’s philosophical practice; instead, this work must and can become part of the philosophical practice of the reader, be it that of Marcus himself or of another reader. The corresponding sections are therefore oral elements featured in written form, whose function is that of an appeal for the reader to put them again into their oral form. In this way, the text becomes an aid for oral philosophizing, as we can observe also in Epicureanism.

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CHAPTER 23

The *Meditations* as a (Philosophical) Autobiography

Irmgard Männlein-Robert

The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius are in many respects an outstanding and singular piece of ancient literature. The Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius composed a very personal text in the Greek language, which is to be taken as a literary text with autobiographic elements and tendency. The so-called *Meditations*¹ of Marcus Aurelius comprise 12 books; they do not have any sort of preface, prooimion, or prologos. They do have a structure, although not a very strict one. Some great themes and subjects the author is concentrating on: relation of a man towards himself, to other people around him, towards the gods, nature, and death. Themes are loosely connected, often in a very associative manner. Sentences are often incomplete, highly aphoristic. In many clauses the verbal phrase is missing, in many other clauses we only find indefinite verbal forms instead of imperatives. The character of quick noting can be seen, the pragmatics of memorizing short, but important sentences with important (philosophical) rules as well.

While older research (e.g. Farquharson (1944)) was tempted to consider the original *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius as lost, and to consider the transmitted text as a kind of disrupted and interrupted sort of *florilegium* of the original work, later scholars (e.g. Dalfen (1967)) interpret structure, themes, and content as very specific, but still in terms of literary traditions (e.g. consolation, diatribe, paraenetic i.e. protreptic literature, meditation literature). Certainly the *Meditations* must be seen as a kind of autobiography, but things are a bit more complicated than in other cases. The first problem is the still-discussed typology of genre or the discussion, if there is something similar to the modern understanding of autobiography in antiquity or before Augustine's *Confessions* at all, which are mostly considered to be the first 'real' autobiography.²

Therefore we first have to sketch the literature under discussion in terms of ancient Greek autobiography before the *Meditations*.

1. What Does ‘Autobiography’ in Antiquity Mean? The *Meditations* in Literary Context

Ancient autobiography is a hybrid and complex genre. There is no established ancient term for the phenomenon we call today ‘autobiography’ (Momigliano (1971) 14f.). There was no specific literary form in which ‘autobiography’ could be found (Misch (3rd edn. 1949) 6f.); there is no normative typology or any theoretic reflection on autobiography in ancient Greek literature, although we detect the phenomenon itself existing in ancient literature and can formulate some single criteria (but there are not many).³ The strongest characteristics of autobiographic literature are identity of author and protagonist, the identity of writer i.e. narrator and described person, and a specific autobiographic intention: theoretic reflection about oneself and one’s life. This means not only describing, but simultaneously constructing (more than reconstructing) identity by referring to one’s character, deeds, life – always referring to the past (Thomä (1998) 165; Pascal (1960); Bourdieu (1994)): therefore, when talking about ancient autobiography, we circulate between ‘récit rétrospectif’ and ‘poetics of autobiography’ (Lejeune (1973) 138; comprehensive is Wagner-Egelhaaf (2nd edn. 2005) 5–10). We tend increasingly to interpret the writing on one’s past as constructing one’s past, as omitting and emphasizing certain things, standard not only in literary composition but also conditioned by faulty human memory.⁴ Furthermore, we can add to this an important condition, described by Philippe Lejeune as ‘pacte autobiographique’, meaning that the audience relies on the identity given between author, narrator, and protagonist.⁵ In general, autobiographic texts always have a reference to reality as the author of this text is a real, existing person, marking a specific difference with fictional texts (Lejeune (1973) 155). But increasingly we realize that we are confronted with more or less subjective, or even fictional, transformations of personal records in autobiographic literature (Eakin (1985) 3; Holdenried (2000) 37–43). Besides, in many autobiographic texts, we can identify a certain tendency, not only to draw a complete picture of person and life, but also to accentuate deeper coherencies. Self-reflection is to be seen as the impetus to write about oneself (Dilthey (1927) 71–74, 196–204; Pascal (1960)); the individual subject is becoming the object to be analyzed (Aichinger (2nd edn. 1998) 170–99, esp. 180). It is this very coincidence of identity of author, narrator, and protagonist and the character of constructing coherence which gives every autobiographic text its own subjective or sentimental melody and its specific, surely not objective truth

(Misch (3rd edn. 1949) 13). Another important criterion is whether the autobiographer intends to publish his text or not: autobiographic texts which turn out to be a self-display or a self-portrait of their author in a specific situation are associated with this sort of text, described by W. Schulze as ‘ego-documents’ (Schulze (1996) 11–30). Texts which bear witness to a degree of introspection and show intense self-perception, and which are written for a mass readership and display the author’s past with reference to the author’s present and future, are to be seen as autobiographic in a stronger sense. These features can be found in many literary genres, even beyond strict boundaries of genre. Autobiographic writing does not form an independent literary genre; it is more a habit of writing than a genre of its own; furthermore, it is preferable not to use the term ‘autobiography’ in discussing ancient literature, but of autobiographic writings or texts, or even better of ‘autobiographic elements’, as Jacoby first proposed.⁶ These are to be found in various contexts and adapted to the conditions of the literary genre in which they are drawn (e.g. biography, romance, diary, letter, historiographical records).⁷

As a kind of subtle preliminary to later autobiographies one could describe the fictional characters in Homer’s epic poem *Odyssey* when talking about their lives, deeds, and events.⁸ But, already in this very inception of Greek literature and literacy, we find interesting variants among the aforementioned criteria in terms of autobiography: if one considers Homer’s *Odyssey* and the fact that Odysseus, while being a host of the Phaeacians at Scheria and while relaying his adventures after the end of the Trojan War, is narrator and narrated (protagonist) in one person, we come close to the field of self-display, self-fashioning, and autobiography. Of course, the main narrator – usually we call him ‘Homer’ – is staging Odysseus referring to his past and survived adventures and, of course, we should rather talk here of something like ‘auto-bio-logia’ than ‘auto-bio-graphia’. Despite this difference, we can get an early glimpse of the so-called ‘autobiographical pact’ since the audience, the Phaeaceans, trust in Odysseus being at once the narrator and that which is narrated. That there is a lot of fantasy and fiction in Odysseus’ stories is beyond doubt, but what connects Odysseus’ self-display with later autobiography, is the very fact that while reflecting on his own (dramatic) past and while narrating an important part of his life, Odysseus is not only constructing a story, but he is also regaining his original identity and self-perception as a hero (Rösler (2005) 29–43, esp. 30–35).

The very first poet in whom we can find autobiographic elements, often in the shape of a ‘seal’ (Sphragis), in the real sense is Hesiod from Askra (circa 700 BC). In his *Theogony* (esp. 22–35) as well as in his *Works and Days* (esp. 633–62) he gives information and hints about important aspects of his personal life. We can find autobiographic hints and records of personal impressions in older Greek poets, especially in Archilochos, Solon, in early geographical literature (e.g.

Skylax of Karyanda) and in historiographical literature of the fifth and early fourth century (Herodotus, Thukydides, Xenophon).⁹

But the great philosopher Plato and the rhetorician Isocrates are usually the first authors on whom we focus while describing the phenomena of early Greek autobiographic writings in more detail (Lehmann (1997) 170; Sonnabend (2002) 59–61): Very often Isocrates' *Antidosis* (Oratio 15) is found to be the very first ancient 'autobiography' (Misch (3rd edn. 1949) 158) in a stricter sense (published in about 355/4 BC). The 82-year-old Isocrates recapitulates his career as a professor of rhetorics and education, and dresses his apologetic self-display as a (fictitious) forensic speech. He defends himself against the accusation of having corrupted the Athenian youth by his rhetorical education and getting paid for it. In his apology he insists on the political aspects and close connection with Athenian politics and thereby blends his own literary activity and public life of Athens.¹⁰ Even with all the well-known differences to the historical Socrates, Isocrates is still modeling himself after the example of Socrates, who defended himself against the false accusation of corrupting the Athenian youth. At least since Plato's pseudo-autobiography of Socrates (the fictive *Apologia*, esp. 18e–24b) Socrates was renowned for insisting on his constant identity and for declaring he had always been the very same.¹¹ Socrates therefore became the model for a philosophical life(-style), setting up his own personality exclusively under strict philosophical, even ethical standards. And Socrates, of course, had to defend himself, which always makes necessary the display of verifiable facts of one's own deeds and life and which always provides a referential dimension to such apologetic speeches or writings. Isocrates is also emphasizing his consistent identity through all the years of educational and political activity: He, his conviction, his teaching, through all his life was always the very same – he simply never went astray (Fuhrmann (1979) 685–90; Marquard (1979) 690–99). And everybody can be identified as an individual person – not least through literature and the autobiographic elements involved. So we realize that autobiographic writing (as in the *Antidosis*) for Isocrates is a vehicle of self-knowledge and self-display together. In general, we see the precedence of apologetic tendencies and autobiographic writing in close context (Most (1989) 114–33). With this in mind, we see very easily how much ancient (pagan) autobiography is owed to the figure of Socrates (Dalfen (2000) 191).

As we said earlier, besides Isocrates' *Antidosis* the *Seventh Letter* of Plato is arguably a very early autobiographic text. The authenticity of this letter is still under discussion:¹² if it turned out to be biography disguised as autobiography (written by a pupil of Plato or somebody belonging to the Academy) or if it proved true autobiography, composed by Plato himself, an argument modern scholars seem to favor,¹³ it would not be such a great leap in terms of autobiographic features. In any case, the narrator in this letter (for reasons of pragmatics let's call him Plato), is describing his own development in terms

of a philosophical life, which impressed the young Dion from Syrakus, whose friends beg for support after his death. The 74-year-old Plato gives a retrospective of his philosophical and political life during the years 404–354 BC. Plato discusses his motivation to go into Sicilian politics, declaring his philosophical persuasion, and embeds this into politics and into facts of his life, which are not given coherently, but are selected and incomplete.¹⁴ The *Seventh Letter* (around 354/3 BC) is composed as an open letter, almost certainly intended for publication. We learn from Plato's very philosophical and political self-display that autobiographic elements are embedded in a mainly apologetic context (Erler (2005) 81). In comparison with Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* in Isocrates' *Antidosis* and Plato's *Seventh Letter* we note a lack of self-reflection, the strict turn to the inner self, while Isocrates and Plato are presenting and defending themselves as 'official' persons in public (cf. Misch (1976) 189–215, esp. 214f.).

In Hellenistic and Roman times (from 323 BC onwards) signatures of artists, self-epitaphs of poets,¹⁵ and *hypomnemata* of politicians and rulers are en vogue. In our outline of the tradition of the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius here we focus on the *hypomnemata*, as there are some important elements to keep in mind for interpreting Marcus' autobiography and as he himself uses the very close diminutive term *hypomnematia* (private notebooks) in describing his own writings (III 14). In what way did he compose *hypomnemata* in a wider sense? First of all we must realize a wide range here: Hellenistic *hypomnemata* (notebooks or aide-mémoires) sometimes refer to more private drafts, sketchy notes without formal interests, for private use of remembering (as a sort of cheat sheet) or providing material for writing to be done at a later date. And sometimes *hypomnemata* are carefully considered documents of self-display from the outset aimed at a mass readership (Engels (1993) 26f.). These texts play an important role in establishing, creating, and correcting public opinion. The Athenian politician Demetrios of Phaleron gave an account of his administration in Athens during the decade 317–307 BC in his *hypomnema* titled *peri tes dekaeteias* ('Above the ten years'; *FGrHist* 228); the Achaean politician Aratos of Sikyon wrote (around 215 BC) 30 books of *hypomnemata*, in which he vindicates himself for his promacedonian politics and which were in parts well preserved through Polybios and Plutarch (*FGrHist* 231). Ptolemaios VIII Euergetes II (second century BC) composed 24 books of *hypomnemata* with a broad range of subjects, of which we get a glimpse via quotations of Athenaios (*FGrHist* 234).¹⁶

Very common in the Roman context of republican times are autobiographic writings of politicians, more or less records and accounts of one's life and deeds – in the beginning still composed in Greek (e.g. P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus Maior: letter [*FGrHist* 232; *HRR* I 44–46]; P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica Corculum [*FGrHist* 233; *HRR* I 47–48]).¹⁷ In the first century

BC the politician Sulla wrote 22 books or *commentarii* with autobiographic content.¹⁸ What we see when we look at the Roman *commentarii* is a much more widespread tendency for self-presentation than in the Hellenistic *hypomnemata*.¹⁹ It seems to be the case that vindication of one's own deeds and merits was very important in the competitive context of Roman aristocracy, whose members had to contend for administrative positions. But here we have to determine that the Roman *commentarii* as vehicles for autobiographic self-display are addressed not to an anonymous public, but to a confined audience, e.g. members of the family, friends, colleagues, or members of the same political classes.²⁰ Even the Roman emperors from Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, until Hadrian composed writings with autobiographic contents and elements, mostly very extensive *commentarii* in many books.²¹ A strong feature of these imperial *commentarii* is their main stress on political and military activities and merits, which are clearly foregrounded. The emperor is displaying himself in his role as emperor, not as an individual human being or even as a private person; he obviously wants to be remembered as ruler in fame and glory.²²

We are searching in vain here for complete and coherent curricula of lives or descriptions of the individual development of an imperial person. We scarcely get a view from inside of an individual's own soul and his inner self (Scholz (2003) 172f.; Pascal (1965) 30ff.). So we draw the conclusion that such a self-display of personal deeds and awards and the resulting control of public opinion obviously do not provide moments of serious personal record (Strasburger (1982) 1102).

In contrast to many *hypomnemata* and Roman *commentarii* the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius have no public character, and were not primarily supposed to be for a public audience. Of course, we always have to keep in mind that Marcus as the Roman emperor must have been aware of being a public person, however, and of the likelihood of his writings emerging into the public domain posthumously. However, their publication was not Marcus' main motivation.²³ As in many passages of his *Meditations* Marcus evokes things, persons, or events not explicitly or by name, but only in general, and makes allusions with universal words (e.g. pronomina). We are still unable today to decipher these enigmatic allusions (e.g. 'the oracle in Caieta' he mentions in I 17. 21 or 'the incident between Antoninus Pius and the tax officer in Tusculum' in I 16. 28).²⁴ Features such as these bring the *Meditations* closer to the genre of diary, which is not primarily intended for public reading (Kurczyk (2006) 27f.). In contrast to earlier autobiographic writings of leading Roman politicians and emperors, who were all obviously most interested in an idealized portrait, Marcus focuses on a critical evaluation of his inner life. By doing so he meets a condition required for an autobiographic writing since St. Augustine's *Confessions* and therefore as a forerunner he must be integrated into this tradition as

a starting point.²⁵ While respecting the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, the extremely close connection of *hypomnemata* with memoirs is very important: In memoirs, which are in general much more literary as *hypomnemata*, usually a person comments on himself (Boemer (1953) 210–50, esp. 222f.). The writer as the protagonist in the narrative of memoirs describes his relation to his whereabouts and people around him; his focus on others is almost the same as on himself; he represents himself in the context of others. Sometimes memoir authors give the impression of being somewhat passive, only describing. Often we find apologetic moments in memoirs. But what marks Marcus' *Meditations* out from the genre of memoirs is his strong focus on his inner self, his own soul and character, what we have already described as different from the known *hypomnemata/commentarii*. As the *Meditations*, at least while being written, were not intended for publication, and do not present a systematic reflection on Marcus' whole life and as they are composed in certain situations, they are quite familiar with so-called 'journals of existence' (Stauffer (2nd edn. 1964); see Kurczyk (2006) 37f.), related to 'ego-documents'. But again we discover a remarkable difference: 'journals of existence' are mostly concentrated on the present. But Marcus in his *Meditations* is reflecting extensively on past times, which makes him better able to cope with present and future challenges. Until now, we may sum up that the *Meditations* display a very special, singular kind of a personal *hypomnema*, which the emperor Marcus has composed for himself.

2. Autobiographic Facts, Traces, and Shadows in the *Meditations*

As we can see from various internal historical facts alluded to, the whole of the *Meditations* must have been written around the last decade of Marcus' life, and in any event after he became emperor:²⁶ he talks about being old (II 2. 6. 11; X 36; cf. VI 30) and quite often he thinks of his own death (e.g. X 34; VIII 25 and 37; X 31; esp. book XII). Some superscriptions are lost, but the first editor Xylander's annotations to the codex labeled 'P' provide at least some localization, allowing for a rough dating of the *Meditations*: The *superscriptio* above book II says 'written among the Quadi, on the river Gran', above book III 'written at Carnuntum'.²⁷ The war against the Sarmats is mentioned only once in the *Meditations* (X 10). If the superscriptions are authentic, they give the military atmosphere of the wars and battles Marcus Aurelius had to fight around the composition of the *Meditations* and as such a kind of atmospheric 'flavor' of the conditions around Marcus (cf. I 17; II 17). Here we catch a shadow of the emperor's experience of realm during his last war campaigns against Marcomanni, Quadi, and Sarmats in his last years, far away from Rome and from home, along the battlefields. It does not seem the most comfortable

ambience conducive to relaxed writing and reflecting on his life. Marcus is facing death every day, everywhere around him: apparently a plausible reason for his frequently reflecting about blood, bones, flesh of the body, all described in dramatic and dark colors (e.g. II 2; cf. VIII 37; III 8; III 13; IV 39; VIII 34; cf. X 10). It seems to be this very situation, these extreme whereabouts, always writing between battles, between dangerous moments, and the omnipresent threat of death, let alone the responsibility for his warriors, in which Marcus Aurelius focuses on what is most important for him, on his inner self, his own life, and ethical development. In terms of autobiography, book I (cf. V 31) is especially interesting. According to the evidence given in the *editio princeps* P, which is based on codex P (now lost) and codex A, our book I was prefixed later (as an introduction), since our book II was undoubtedly denoted book I (Farquharson (1944, repr. 1968) vol. I, lxixf.). Our book I does in fact deviate from the other books of the *Meditations* in terms of content, structure, and style. It consists of a catalogue of 16 people in separate passages. All these persons are acknowledged by certain virtues and, for this reason, they all function as examples and standards. We encounter members of his family, such as, for example, his grandfather Verus, his biological father, his mother, his great grandfather, and his brother (I 1–4; 17) as well as important teachers, i.e. Diognetos, the stoic philosopher Rusticus, Apollonius, and Sextus, then Alexander, the philologist, the famous rhetorician Fronto, Alexander, the Platonist, and Catulus, the Peripatetic philosopher Severus and Maximus (I 6–15).²⁸ In a very personal and affectionate manner Marcus pays homage to his adoptive father Antoninus Pius, who is an extremely important figure for Marcus (I 16), and whom he mentions again in VI 30. Marcus retrospectively expresses his thanks to all these affiliated persons because of certain qualities, virtues, and features, which he learned from them, and by the end of his catalogue he proves himself grateful to the gods for having become acquainted with all these people and others in addition, such as his wife, and for his good luck in life (I 17). Marcus takes stock of his own development in the form of a retrospective catalogue, and reflects on the influences he underwent in terms of character, behavior, and ethics prosaically. He seems to adore such systematic records – an example is in book VI (48), in which Marcus describes qualities of character as recommended standards of which one should always be aware. Besides, it is extremely interesting to see how Marcus adapts the old form of catalogue, which since Homeric times reflects a characteristic aristocratic interest in demonstrating and constructing genealogy and by doing so, of course, constructing authority and legitimacy. But Marcus is presenting not a usual genealogical tree of aristocrats (as we might easily expect from a Roman emperor), but a very individual and private catalogue of people around him, who mark the genealogy, development, and formation of his own mind, intellect, and soul. Furthermore Marcus declares that still he is not really

able to cope with these high standards actualized by these people, that they describe ideals he still has to achieve. All the qualities, which Marcus attributes in chains of rich adjectives to certain men, are mentioned with a specific relevance to himself.²⁹ They figure as a kind of ethic purpose he strives to accomplish, so we can conclude a protreptic function. Corresponding with that is a passage in book V (31) on his social context: there Marcus looks gratefully back on his life and examines how he has conducted himself against his fellow men and what he himself has given in a moral sense or in the form of benefits (correct Misch (3rd edn. 1949) 493). As a whole we must take the specific catalogue in book I not only as an autobiographic document expressing thanks and commitment, but also as a singular record of unsparing self-criticism.³⁰

What else are we able to get out of the *Meditations* in terms of autobiographic hints? While mentioning illnesses and an ill body (e.g. VI 29; IV 44) we may guess that Marcus' physical health was not the best. Many times he comes to speak about how to cope with aches, but always he qualifies statements like this and declares physical pain to be nothing else than natural, which therefore must not discourage from fulfilling necessary duties (VI 33; VII 33 and 64). And indeed, Marcus' later biographers (Cassius Dio; *Historia Augusta*) confirm chronic diseases particularly in his youth, but later on as well (e.g. Cassius Dio 71, 36, 3). Besides, from the *Meditations* we gather that Marcus worried about a possible successor, when he mentions the loss of several children (mostly in the 260s; X 34) or the actual illness of a child (VIII 49) or when he makes a remark on a pregnancy of his wife (IX 3), who has borne at least 11 children.³¹ And when Marcus is concerned about how he was perceived and assessed in public (which his biographers again confirm), we get a further autobiographic spot in the *Meditations* (III 4; IV 18; V 3. 25. 28; VIII 1; IX 5; XII 2f.; cf. *HA* 7, 1; 29, 5).

3. The *Meditations* as a 'Philosophical' Autobiography

What we have to consider first here is the enduring problem the ancient Greeks, and first and foremost philosophers (e.g. Aristotle, Plutarch),³² had with presenting and displaying themselves explicitly. Just to make it clear: the ancient Greeks certainly did display themselves, but when we see the historian Xenophon narrating about himself in his (more or less) autobiographic *Anabasis* not only in third person, but also assuming a pseudonym, just to appear as neutral as possible, and when we see the rhetorician Isocrates apologizing at the beginning of his *Antidosis* for talking about himself, or the philosopher Plato explicitly making clear that with his autobiographic

Seventh Letter he is only reacting to the request of Dion's friends, then we have to notice a certain reluctance to display oneself – at least from a moral point of view.³³ Therefore Isocrates and Plato (and, earlier, Socrates) combine their self-display, however they were motivated, with a strong apologetic countenance; to put it another way, obviously it belongs to apologetic contexts to speak about oneself, usually considered as embarrassing.³⁴ On the contrary the Romans were not so reluctant to talk about themselves, as it was common and even necessary in political respects. With this in mind we can understand that what Marcus Aurelius is doing is much more Greek than all the autobiographic writings of the previous Roman emperors since Hadrian – not to mention that he is writing in Greek. Marcus does not describe himself in a modern egomaniac sense; furthermore we do not witness self-presentation in an established imperial mode, but a very special philosophical dialogue of Marcus with himself. What is most striking is the dialogue structure underlying the whole text. Of course, when Marcus is talking with himself, he uses a pattern very common in Greek literature from the very beginning: in Homer's epic poems heroes talk with their 'heart' (e.g. *Iliad* 11, 404–10; *Odyssey* 20, 18), the tragic poet Euripides lets his Medea talk with her 'heart' (*Medea* 1056ff.), which was a favored classical text for Stoic philosophers.³⁵ What Marcus is presenting is a very similar kind of conversation with himself. He even apostrophizes his own soul explicitly (II 6 and X 1). By doing so, he manages to distance him from himself. So he is staging a second 'ego' inside himself, towards whom he turns, to whom he submits his admonitions, reflections on life and death, and thanks. So here we deal with the phenomenon of Marcus splitting up his self into an 'inner self' and a 'reflecting self'. When reflecting on anything, Marcus is addressing himself (Dalfen (2000) 193; van Ackeren (2006) 54–67, esp. 56). Usually we recognize as a constant phenomenon of many ancient and even more modern autobiographic texts a lack of distance between author and what he represents, which must surely be ascribed to the identities of the people representing and represented (Kurczyk (2006) 25). But we do not see such subjectivity at all in the *Meditations* – on the contrary Marcus tries hard to get the greatest possible distance from himself. This enables him to analyze and to diagnose his own merits and demerits without any mercy or self-pity. At this point we must emphasize a remarkable difference between our concept of an individual subjective self (a concept mostly shaped by Christianity) and the ancient, above all Stoic, concept of a self, to be taken to mean a small part of the comprehensive cosmos, whose nature is governing the human nature and human self and is providing structure and destination (microcosmos – macrocosmos; van Ackeren (2006) 57). And from many points of view we notice Stoic philosophical beliefs, structures, and doctrines in Marcus' *Meditations*, but also Cynic and perhaps even Platonic ones (Gill (2007) 175–77; Perkins (1992) 269).

What is more, Marcus is analyzing, criticizing, or reflecting on himself in order to become a morally better person. Marcus is deploying a method of reflection often related to the Stoic philosophers Seneca the younger (circa AD 4–65) and Epictetus (circa AD 55–135), but which goes back to an old method well known from the Pythagorean tradition of meditation. We should respect that already Seneca's and Epictetus' practice of soul-searching under philosophical (ethical) standards is to be related not only to the Hellenistic methods of meditation and therapy of self (e.g. Epicurus), but finally to the methods and therapies of the Pythagorean sect, quoted explicitly by Seneca (e.g. *Epistulae* 52, 10; 90, 6; 94, 42; esp. 108, 17–19) and Epictetus as well (e.g. referring to the so-called 'Golden Verses' ascribed to Pythagoras himself: *Diss.* III 10, 2f.).³⁶ It is important to keep in mind that the Pythagoreans came up again around the middle of the first century BC at Rome, where we can grasp a groundswell of interest in old Greek philosophers and their doctrines (esp. Pythagoras and Plato). We know about individuals and philosophers, first Nigidius Figulus, then Quintus Sextius and his pupil Sotion, the later teacher of Seneca the younger, who all combined Pythagorean doctrines, methods, and style of life with Stoic philosophy (Seneca, *Epistulae* 59, 7; 64, 2f.; 108, 17–23; *dialogi* 5, 36, 1 = *de ira* 3, 36, 1–3).³⁷ From here we get some impressions of a characteristic Roman amalgamation of Greek philosophy, mainly concentrated on aspects of practical application and adaptation to daily life. As far as we are aware, there were many Neopythagorean philosophers and adherents during the first and second centuries AD.³⁸

Marcus is aligning himself into this Stoic-transformed, but older, tradition of meditation first by the method of daily recapitulating his own merits and demerits and correcting himself, which must be assigned to the old concept of 'care of the self'.³⁹ The *Meditations* are to be seen as an exemplar of the Hellenistic culture and fashion of *encheiridia* (little handbooks), which are produced mainly for one's own purposes – in order to have important philosophical maxims, sentences, or doctrines at hand in a moment, when needed. Marcus himself defines as necessary to keep philosophical sentences and doctrines always available in the same way a medical doctor must have prepared and available his instruments for procedures suddenly necessary (III 13; cf. III 11). Philosophical tenets and theorems are to be seen as instruments for the soul to be equipped to meet the demands of life. Since Pierre Hadot's important research we call meditative writings based on reflections and sentences 'spiritual exercises', a genre to which Epictetus' *Encheiridion* as well as Marcus' *Meditations* obviously belong (see Hadot (2nd edn. 2005) esp. 69–98). These 'spiritual exercises' are good examples of Hellenistic philosophy's bias towards practical ethics. We must now take into account the fact that the Stoic practice of meditating leads to the shaping of the inner self and towards autobiographic writing (cf. Cacciatore (1995) 257). Such spiritual

texts of philosophical provenance generate a very personal sort of text – personal notebooks – which usually are not handed down because of their personal, not readily adaptable character (Hadot (2nd edn. 2005) 69ff.). Therefore we must approach texts like the *Meditations* as private philosophical reflections, quasi-private liturgical texts. Often Marcus admonishes and urges himself, to focus only on important things (e.g. II 4) or to think of all the famous (named here are Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Socrates) and the not-famous people before and now dead (VI 47).⁴⁰ In so many contexts Marcus appeals to authorities, either fellow-men or philosophers, either implicitly or explicitly. What he learned from them or what he gained from their writings, he reproduces by heart (Dalfen (2000) 192 and (1967)). Once more we gather some autobiographic information, now about Marcus and his attitude towards books and bookishness: time and again Marcus reminds himself to banish books (e.g. II 3; III 14; IV 30), which means articulation of a certain philosophical worldview. From these and familiar remarks we may infer that the young Marcus was an enthusiastic student of philosophical, mainly even logic, literature, but when he grew older, he grew more and more skeptical as regards strict intellectual disciplines and their relevance for life (V 6. 14. 28; VI 14. 44; VII 55. 64. 68. 72; VIII 7; XI 1).⁴¹ In his later critics on a pure intellectual scholarship his main interests in practical ethics, in modes and methods of living a morally modest life become clear. As he ages, Marcus favors writing on himself and to himself, reflecting his errors and merits, his experiences, his social relations, which has practical ethical pertinence. Here we detect an originally Greek practice of self-analysis aiming for ‘care for the self’ shaped in typical Roman manner concentrated on practical relevance (see Erler (1998) 381). Therefore autobiography in the *Meditations* comes out as analysis of self, in the strict concentration on one’s own soul. This includes abstraction of the daily whereabouts, of his job as emperor, of himself and instead reduction to the real essentials and includes a ‘view from above’ to all human affairs (for details see Hadot (2nd edn. 2005) 123–35). He admittedly sometimes considers himself to be the Roman emperor (III 5; VI 26. 30; 44; IX 29; X 31; XI 18. 1), but mostly simply to be a human being – in usual physical, psychological, intellectual, and social respects. It is this very reduction of Marcus to the level of an ordinary human being which may count as a specific philosophical feature. In addition, it might have been quite unusual for a Roman emperor to regard himself mainly as a Roman citizen (II 5; III 5; VI 44; cf. III 14) and to abandon political aspects (Brunt (1974) 2). But Marcus understands Rome as metaphor for the Stoic conception of cosmopolitanism. He adopts via Posidonius the idea of the world being a coherent organism in which all is interrelated, a theory which incorporates the metaphor of the world being a *polis*. So Marcus can label himself as Roman, as belonging to Rome the cosmopolitan city, symbolizing the cosmos of the whole world including every single individual

(VI 36. 38; see further Neuenschwander (1951)). We even see how Marcus subordinates himself under the rule of the cosmos (II 4). Whether Marcus is adopting this ‘view from above’ or cosmic perspective based on ethical or rather physical reasons is still under discussion, but in any event the concepts of cosmopolis and the equality of mankind include ethical and physical ideas.⁴² This strategy of methodically examining himself, his circumstances, nature, and all events around him we may call an analytic stripping-off or diaheretic procedure,⁴³ sometimes even with an embarrassing or uncomfortable flavor (e.g. IX 36). In this procedure things are reduced to their real being, and seemingly important or threatening things become explainable or even unimportant, and fear disappears. So his autobiographic writing even has a consolatory function for Marcus. But just to make it clear: he is not indulging himself in sentimental consolations and reviews; always critical on himself, he sticks to his future aims of constituting moral identity and self-improvement – at least as far as possible (Dalfen (2000) 201). Different from traditional autobiographic writings also in the Roman context Marcus is not interested in displaying his own life as successful, but in giving a paraenetic and protreptic inventory of his inner self in terms of self-correction. We may claim this method to be relevant especially in autobiographic terms: for it is identity-establishing and -constructing and belongs, together with the selective character of every autobiography (as retrospective), to the aforementioned standards of autobiographic writings. Just to mention an interesting fact last here: What is specifically ‘philosophical’ in the *Meditations* as an autobiographical text, is the internalization of ‘life’ by reflecting less on events during his life than on (related) persons, habits, and behaviors which made an impact on his soul. To compound this point we should keep in mind the ‘retreat into himself’ Marcus mentions over and over (e.g. IV 3; VI 3) to be a striking philosophical and – as an ascetic – for an emperor, a most unusual feature of an autobiographic notebook.

4. Conclusion

First, of course, it is the given fact of identity of author, narrator, and protagonist which allows us to declare the *Meditations* of Marcus as an autobiographic writing. We find autobiographic traits not as central features, but mostly associative allusions – as well as book I where Marcus presents his catalogue of exemplary persons.⁴⁴ As Marcus is addressing himself, often it is enough to indicate the events. Above, the *Meditations* are to be called a ‘philosophical’ autobiography for several reasons. What Marcus is doing is analyzing himself in a quite rigorous manner. In Marcus’ times meditating and care for self have already been transformed and made Roman, but in fact Marcus finds old Greek philosophical reflections a convenient method, as used

in the Stoic school of his times. We understand his self-analysis in the context of construction of identity. Marcus is working hard on improving himself in moral terms and on achieving the right attitude towards everything and everybody. In doing so he does not claim to have an absolutely identical identity, being always the same, a feature often considered to be a constitutive element of ancient autobiography (cf. Isocrates' *Antidosis*; Fuhrmann (1979)). Moreover he formulates aims and targets he still has to reach. But what is interesting here is the fact that Marcus, although not always having been the same, puts his main focus on the always same and identical philosophical *purposes* he seeks to achieve.⁴⁵ In XI 21 Marcus makes clear: 'Who does not have one and the same *skopos* [aim in life], cannot be the same his whole life long.' In the context of all ancient philosophical schools this aim '*skopos*' i.e. '*telos*' means 'happiness', which naturally is determined by every school in a different way. This teleological view has no reference to his life in general (Niggel (1992) 58–65, esp. 59 and (2005) 5), but to his internal development in terms of philosophical and ethical aims.⁴⁶ Identity of a person for Marcus therefore has to do with identity of aims (Dalfen (2000) 201). By shifting the usual trait of identity from individual to common human aims Marcus presents once more an outstanding aspect of his *Meditations*, which are – nevertheless – in terms of genre to be considered a fascinating unique and hybrid philosophical and autobiographic text.⁴⁷

NOTES

1. Xylander, the editor of the *editio princeps*, used the title *Eis heauton* ('To himself'), which is supposed to be inauthentic; cf. the speculations of modern interpreters (Dalfen (2000) 192f. n. 20). The text is quoted from the edition of Dalfen (2nd edn. 1987).
2. Cf. for instance Spengemann (1980) 1–33, but better see Dalfen (2000) 187f.
3. Trédé-Boulmer (1993) 13–20; cf. de Man (1979a) and (1979b), who takes autobiography as a figure of reading.
4. Pietzcker (2005) 15–27, esp. 18f.; Reimer (2001); Fried (2003); Wagner-Egelhaaf (2nd edn. 2005) 43f., 47f., 87–91.
5. Lejeune (1973) 137–62. Cf. Bruss (1974) 14–26, who argues that this pact does not work, if a greater temporal distance is given between author and audience.
6. Jacoby (1909) 1157–63. Modern authors often use this term without referring to Jacoby (e.g. Zimmermann (2005) 238; Dalfen (2000) 188).
7. A still excellent outline of the genre within the scope of biography is Momigliano (1971).
8. First Suerbaum (1968) 150–77, then following Zimmermann (2007) 3–9.
9. Overview in Momigliano (1971) esp. 23–58. For autobiographical hints in poets see Niedermeier (1919); for the historians see Zimmermann (2002) 187–95.

10. Momigliano (1971) 59f.; cf. the late antique autobiography by the rhetorician Libanios (*Oratio* I); Norman (1965).
11. Cf. Socrates in Plato's *Phaidon*, see Erler (2005) 88–92.
12. Outline in Brisson (3rd edn. 1997); id. (2000) 15–24 and Erler (2005) 75f. tend to take it for authentic, but also stress the fact that an open letter has to be seen as an autobiographic discourse anyway. Questions of authorship therefore are to be neglected.
13. After Momigliano (1971) 60–22 see mainly Brisson (2000); Erler (2005).
14. Cf. the stronger modern definition of autobiography to be criticized, see Starobinski (2nd edn. 1998) 200.
15. Poets compose their own epitaphs blending real autobiographic facts and autobiographic fictions, see Männlein-Robert (2007) 363–83.
16. Meister (1990) 83–89 and Engels (1993) 19–36, esp. 20f.
17. Examples in Kurczyk (2006) 48ff.; Engels (1993) 33.
18. Scholz (2003) 172–96. For the discussion, if there was a Greek version of Sulla's *commentarii* as for other Roman *commentarii* as well, see Lewis (1993) 697f.
19. Misch (3rd edn. 1949) 247; for a more detailed typology see Reichel (2005) 56ff.
20. Kurczyk (2006) 50 and esp. Scholz (2007) 385–405, esp. 396.
21. In greater detail see Lewis (1993) 629–706; Dalfen (2000) 189.
22. For more details see Malitz (2003) 227–42 and Pausch (2004) 303–36.
23. Misch (3rd edn. 1949) 450 takes publication as given; *pace* Dalfen (2000) 192.
24. Cf. also I 7; II 4. 1; XI 16. 2f. See Brunt (1974) 5; more evidence in Dalfen (2000) 193 n. 21.
25. *Pace* Kurczyk (2006) 43 with further literature.
26. Farquharson (1944, repr. 1968) vol. II, lxxxiii; Birley (1968) 382f.; for dating in detail (e.g. book I: before AD 175, books II–III: AD 171–75) see Brunt (1974) 1–20, esp. 18f.
27. Farquharson (1944, repr. 1968) vol. I, esp. lxixf.; Rutherford (1989) 45–47.
28. Cf. *HA* 2, 7–3, 3 and Cassius Dio 72, 35; more detailed is Rutherford (1989) 115–25.
29. For instance when mentioning the irascibility he is often struggling against (II 1; 10; 16), while his teachers had a good grip on themselves (e.g. I 1; cf. 9. 9; 15. 6).
30. Rutherford (1989) 90–115; Dalfen (2000) 193–96; but cf. Birley (1968), who takes book I as a 'testament'.
31. See outline in Birley (1968) 422.
32. Cf. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* IV 3, 1125a19–34; *Politica* III 1–4; Plutarch, *De laude ipsius*, esp. c. 2; see Pernot (1998) 102 n. 2.
33. Reichel (2005) 69; but cf. Thukydides IV 104, 4 with Reichel (2005) 59.
34. For the phenomenon of *periautologia* ('talk about oneself') in orators and rhetoricians see Pernot (1998) 101–24, esp. 105.
35. Regarding the interest of the stoic philosopher Chrysippus in that phenomenon, Gill (1996) 226–39.
36. These are a collection of sentences ascribed to Pythagoras, but actually enclosed Hellenistic material mostly about ways of living, from questions of diet up to soul-searching, Riedweg (2002) 159–61.

37. See Newman (1989) 1473–1517 and Kahn (2001) 90–93, 139–46.
38. Serious ones are e.g. Moderatos of Gades, Nikomachos of Gerasa; cf. the much discussed Apollonios of Tyana.
39. Humphries (1997) 125–38; cf. Thomä (1998) esp. 298f. (without referring to Marcus Aurelius).
40. Cf. VII 19, where Chrysippus, Socrates, and Epictetus are mentioned.
41. Cf. his teacher Fronto, *Epistulae ad Marcum Caesarem* IV 13, 2; *De eloquentia* 2, 13; 2, 17; 5, 4.
42. Discussion is outlined by Gill (2007) 175–87.
43. In greater detail Hadot (2nd edn. 2005) 73ff.; without any reference to Marcus Aurelius, but to modern autobiography see Niggel (1992) 599f. for self-analysis in autobiography.
44. So with Dalfen (2000) 206, who with good reason mentions ((2000) 206f., in context of catalogues in autobiography) a letter written by Fronto addressed to Marcus Aurelius (*De nepote amisso* 2, 8f. Van den Hout); cf. Erler (1998) 379, who points again (after Dalfen (1967) 194ff.) to parallels with the catalogues of Lucretius. For discussion of physical symptoms in the letters between Marcus and Fronto see Perkins (1992) esp. 270–72.
45. For moral identity see Haker (1999) in detail.
46. Cassius Dio, one of the biographers of Marcus Aurelius, states in his summary that Marcus has always been the same and that he was a good man (Cassius Dio 71, 34, 5; cf. *HA* 14, 5) – we cannot decide whether Cassius Dio says that after having examined other evidence, or whether he takes for granted Marcus' own ideal standards; skeptical about that is Rosen (2002) 421–25.
47. For the hybrid mix of various literary genres see van Ackeren (2006) 59f.

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CHAPTER 24

Marcus and Previous Stoic Literature

Christopher Gill

1. Marcus as a Stoic

How do Marcus' Aurelius' *Meditations* relate to previous Stoic literature or indeed any relevant earlier literature? On this question, as on many others, Marcus' book appears initially to be a quite exceptional work. But, on closer inspection, it proves to be deeply embedded in Stoic thought, and offers its own distinctive insights into core Stoic themes and the Stoic outlook on life.

Was Marcus a Stoic? The answer is surely 'yes'; but there are some indications pointing in the opposite direction. The *Meditations* never mention Zeno (334–262 BC), founder of Stoicism, and only twice refer to Chrysippus (circa 280 – circa 206 BC), the most important Stoic theorist (6.42, 7.19). Marcus refers to 'the Stoics', on one occasion, as if he were not one (though he may mean 'Stoic teachers', 5.10). He also acknowledges his incomplete study and understanding of two of the three main branches of Stoic philosophy, in addition to ethics, that is, logic (or dialectic) and physics (study of nature) (1.17.22, 7.67). On the other hand, he refers extensively to, and quotes, the Presocratic thinker Heraclitus, Plato, and Epicurus, alongside poets such as Homer and Euripides (Hammond and Clay (2006) 222–24). More importantly, as brought out later, he seems sometimes to adopt a Platonic, rather than Stoic, approach to psychology, while his language often evokes Cynicism. As regards his world-view, he sometimes poses a question, 'providence or atoms?', which implies that he is unsure whether the Stoic or the Epicurean picture of the universe is true. These features of the *Meditations* have made

scholars ask whether Marcus was really a Stoic or, at least, how much of a Stoic he was (Rist (1982); Gill (2007a)).

However, there are other factors pointing to a strong engagement with Stoicism on Marcus' part. In a letter from the young Marcus to his oratory teacher Fronto, he expresses his enthusiasm for the early Stoic thinker Aristo (*Letters to Marcus Caesar* IV.13 = Haines (1919) 1.214–19; cf. Rutherford (1989) 105–106). In *Meditations* 1.7, he thanks another teacher, Junius Rusticus, for introducing him to the *Discourses* of Epictetus, which are cited, or alluded to, throughout the *Meditations*. As illustrated later here, and elsewhere in this volume, the content of the *Meditations* reflects strongly a series of central ideas in Stoicism, especially in ethics but also on the interface of ethics and physics. Also, the non-Stoic thinkers or movements referred to in the *Meditations* are mostly ones which had played a significant role in the formation of Stoicism or were seen as important to Stoics. This point applies to Heraclitus, Plato, and Cynicism (Long (1996) chs. 1–2; Gill (forthcoming)). More specifically, Marcus uses the characteristic idioms of these thinkers in order to bring out more forcefully certain central Stoic themes (see sections 4–5 below). The question of Marcus' attitude to Epicureanism is more complex; but on this point too, it is very clear that his primary allegiance is to Stoicism (section 5 below). Questions remain about exactly how closely the *Meditations* reflect orthodox Stoic theory. But there is little room for doubt that Stoicism is far and away the most important influence on the *Meditations* and that, to make sense of this work, we need to relate it, first and foremost, to earlier Stoic writings.

2. Stoic Practical Ethics

Which Stoic writings are most important? In ethics, which is the most relevant area for the *Meditations*, three kinds of works need to be considered. Full-scale treatises on ethics, especially by Chrysippus, were widely studied in the first and second century AD by Stoic teachers such as Epictetus and their students. These have now all been lost, except for quotations and later references. But available for us, as they were for Marcus, are Cicero's Latin versions of certain treatises, notably *On Duties*, of which two books are closely based on a work by the last Head of the Stoic school, Panaetius (circa 185 – circa 110 BC), and Books 3–4 of his *Tusculan Disputations*, which draw on Chrysippus' work *On Passions*. Also available are extended summaries of key theses in Stoic ethics, two of which, by Cicero (*On Ends* Book 3) and Arius Didymus (circa 70 – circa 9 BC; Stobaeus 2.57–116), derive from the period before Marcus. Neither the *Meditations* nor the letters to Fronto refer explicitly to these two kinds of writing (though Chrysippus is mentioned in the *Meditations*, as noted earlier). But it is very

likely that Marcus was familiar with both kinds of work. However, the third kind of writing is the most relevant. This consists of – what we might call – practical or applied ethics. In the first century AD, we have records of practically oriented teachings by the Stoics Musonius Rufus (circa AD 30–100) and Epictetus (circa AD 55–135). We also have (fictional) letters and dialogues or essays by the politician and philosopher Seneca (circa 1 BC – AD 65) in the same style. (See Hadot (1995); Sellars (2003), (2007); Gill (2003) 40–44.) As noted earlier, the *Meditations* cite and echo the reports of Epictetus' teachings provided by the historian Arrian. But Marcus may well have known the other Stoic writings and his *Meditations* clearly offer a version of the same project.

What exactly was the project of Stoic practical ethics? In this period, we find a number of typologies, used to define the kind of guidance offered by teaching in practical ethics. One typology subdivides ethics into protreptic (encouragement to engage in philosophy), therapy (especially removing false beliefs), and giving positive advice (Stobaeus 2.39.20–41.25). Although this schema is linked especially with Philo of Larisa (158–84 BC), an Academic or Platonic teacher, the framework applies to styles of ethical teaching more generally. Other typologies are associated more directly with Stoic teaching. For instance, Seneca identifies an alternative three-fold schema: (1) assessing the value of any given thing, (2) adopting a measured and appropriate motivation towards things selected as desirable, and (3) achieving consistency between your motivation and your action (*Letters* 89.14). We find a similar, though not identical, pattern in the reports of Epictetus' teachings. Topic 1 consists in distinguishing between things or actions which are 'up to us' to carry out or not, and focusing our objectives on the former. Topic 2 consists in developing the appropriate kind of motivation, especially as regards our relations with other people. Topic 3 centers on achieving complete consistency within our belief-set and between beliefs and actions (Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.2.1–15; Long and Sedley (1987) section 56).

Underlying the typologies found in Seneca and Epictetus is a fundamental, and influential, feature of Stoic philosophy, namely their thinking about ethical development. Stoics, in partial contrast to Plato and Aristotle, maintain that all human beings as such are capable of developing ethically, and indeed of achieving ethical perfection or 'wisdom'. The process of development is conceived as 'appropriation' or 'familiarization', that is, making yourself at one or at home with your own nature, and that of other people and the world as a whole. This process of development is subdivided into two strands, individual and social. The first strand consists in a progressive orientation of motivation, first towards rational selection of things that benefit our nature, and then towards selection that is consistent and appropriate, that is, towards virtue. The ideal culmination of this process is the recognition that virtue is the only thing

desirable for its own sake, by contrast with the beneficial things pursued at earlier stages in the development. The social strand in development consists in the progressive deepening and enlargement of the motive to benefit others of our kind, a motive which is taken to be basic to all animals and exemplified in parental love. This development, as it proceeds, can issue both in well-motivated engagement in family and communal life and in coming to see any given human being whom we encounter as an object of ethical concern, or member of the 'brotherhood of humankind'. (See Cicero, *On Ends* 3.17–22 and 62–68; cf. Long and Sedley (1987) sections 57 and 59, esp. D; Reydam-Schils (2005) ch. 2; Gill (2006) 129–66.) The three-fold typologies of ethical guidance found in Seneca and Epictetus represent ways of taking forward these two strands in development and of co-ordinating the two strands.

3. Marcus' Version of Practical Ethics

How far can we compare the project of the *Meditations* with that of earlier Stoic writings in practical ethics? We need, first, to register certain general differences. Unlike Musonius Rufus or Epictetus, Marcus was not a Stoic teacher but a Roman emperor, whose main daily duties were those of conducting warfare and civil administration. The teachings of Musonius and Epictetus, and their written versions, along with Seneca's letters and essays, are directed at other people, whether students or readers treated as students, or at least fellow-learners. In the *Meditations*, Marcus only addresses himself, and there is no indication that the work was intended for others or for publication. Apart from Book 1, a record of thanks to other people, and the gods, who helped Marcus in his ethical development, the work has no obvious internal organization. The *Meditations* appear to be a philosophical notebook or diary, in which Marcus wrote down his thoughts at rare moments of leisure or reflection in an intensely busy and demanding life. (The headings of two of the books, 2 and 3, indicate that he was campaigning in Germany at the time of writing.) Marcus does not spell out explicitly the precise aims of his writing. Perhaps the closest he comes to doing so is in this passage (4.3.3) (translations of the *Meditations* are based on Hard and Gill (2011), sometimes modified):

So constantly grant yourself this retreat and so renew yourself; but keep within you concise and basic precepts that will be enough, at first encounter, to cleanse you from all distress and to send you back without discontent to the life to which you will return.

In other words, Marcus uses his notebook to encapsulate, in brief and striking formulations, core principles which will help give him an ethical

framework for his life and provide the emotional resilience to cope with the demands and vicissitudes of his life.

Although the form of the *Meditations* differs markedly from the previous writings on Stoic practical ethics, the underlying aim seems to be the same. The passage just cited (4.3.3) evokes, though in a rather generalized way, two standard genres in this kind of writing, namely therapy ('cleansing' from distress) and advice ('precepts'). Elsewhere, we find what seem to be versions of the three-fold typology presented by Epictetus, though arranged in a different order (8.7, 9.7, 9.36). Indeed, Epictetus' typology is sometimes seen as providing a framework by which we can analyze the whole complex of themes that we find in the *Meditations* (Hadot (1995) 195–202, (1998) chs. 5–8), though this view may overstate the unity and coherence of such an unsystematic work. However, in a broader sense, Marcus' reflections seem to evoke the methods of ethical guidance offered by these earlier writings (cf. Chapter 34 in this volume). They also reflect the underlying goal of these methods, namely promoting ethical development, as understood in Stoicism. The *Meditations* convey vividly the sense of human life as an ethical journey or quest towards the state of mind, way of relating to other people, and world-view of the ideal wise person or 'sage'.

Some of the ways in which Marcus takes forward this process in the *Meditations* recall, more or less closely, the themes of the typologies of Seneca or Epictetus. However, these themes are sometimes presented in a style that evokes non-Stoic thinkers. For instance, the first topics for both Seneca and Epictetus center on examining the value of things to be pursued, which involves, for Epictetus, distinguishing between what does and does not fall within our agency or what is 'up to us'. This can be linked with the first strand of Stoic thinking on development, a crucial part of which inheres in refocusing our motivation on selecting beneficial things appropriately and moving towards virtue, rather than regarding things such as health and wealth as ends in themselves (Cicero, *On Ends* 3.17–22). A number of characteristic themes in the *Meditations* can be linked with this point. One, illustrated shortly (in 3.11), is that of 'stripping' situations to their moral essentials, and peeling off trivial or conventional aspects. This theme is partly analogous to Epictetus' recurrent stress that we should 'examine our impressions' (or how things 'appear to us') before we 'assent to' these impressions and form judgments about what is worth pursuing (Epictetus, *Handbook* 1–2; cf. *Meditations* 11.37 = Epictetus fr. 27). A related theme, which also has a precursor in Epictetus, is that the element in ourselves we should most value (or identify ourselves with) is our mind or 'governing part' (*hēgemonikon*), rather than our body or other parts of our nature. As I bring out later (section 5), this motif has rather Platonic connotations; but the essential point is to reinforce a central Stoic moral claim.

We can perhaps associate with this complex of ideas another recurrent theme in the *Meditations* with Platonic connotations, the adoption of a 'view from above' or 'cosmic viewpoint' (e.g. 7.48, 9.30, 32). A related motif, which carries Cynic connotations, is the stress on the transience of human life and the idea that death comes to all people equally, whatever their social or political status in life (e.g. 3.3, 4.32–3, 6.47; cf. Rutherford (1989) 155–67). These themes seem to be used by Marcus as a way of distancing himself from conventional attitudes and practices, which place value on what is not really (that is, ethically) important. A similar line of thought probably also explains Marcus' use of phrases that suggest disgust at the body and the physical world in general. For instance, he describes luxurious food as 'the corpse of a fish', and love-making as 'the friction of a piece of gut, the expulsion of some mucus' (6.13). Similarly, he characterizes fine marbles as 'calluses of the earth', and the purple (used for imperial robes) as 'blood from a shellfish' (9.36). Taken on its own, this phraseology suggests Platonic-style rejection of the body or a Cynic desire to shock by rejecting conventional norms. But the underlying point is to stress in another way the importance of what matters fundamentally to us, that is, our status as ethical agents or what Epictetus calls what is 'up to us', by contrast with material or social benefits, which Stoic ethics regards as, ultimately, 'matters of indifference' (Long and Sedley (1987) section 58).

The second element in the typologies of Seneca and Epictetus centers on reorienting or modifying our motivation in line with the ethical valuation adopted in the first stage. Epictetus, in particular, stresses that this topic has special relevance for the way we conduct interpersonal and social relationships. We can link with this topic a theme found in both Epictetus and Marcus. This is that we should not react to situations, as people typically do, by adding the judgment that something is good or bad, when this is not ethically justified (that is, when we are really placing value on things that are 'matters of indifference'). It is reactions of this kind that, in Stoic theory, stimulate (bad) emotions or passions, such as anger or grief, which are seen as based on these false valuations. However, both Epictetus and Marcus see a role for the 'good emotions' (*eupatheiai*), such as wishing or joy, which are based on sound ethical judgments and are characteristic of wise people (Long and Sedley (1987) section 65; cf. Engberg-Pedersen (1998)). In this motif we can see signs of a considered attempt to translate ethical valuations into actions and feelings, in line with the programs of Seneca and Epictetus.

The theme of emotions is linked by Marcus, like Epictetus, with the proper conduct of relationships with other people. For instance, Marcus stresses that seeing people as fellow-members of the brotherhood of humankind can help us get rid of emotions such as anger and resentment. More broadly, as regards social relationships, we find in the *Meditations*, as in Seneca and Epictetus, both of the two main strands in Stoic political theory. We find the idea that the social

side of ethical development leads both to committed and reasoned engagement in one's local community and to regarding any given human being as a fellow-member of a worldwide ethical community. In Seneca, for instance, these two aspects are presented as forming a kind of 'dual citizenship', in which we think of ourselves as belonging both to a local and a universal community (*On Leisure* 4.1). Marcus sometimes offers a similar formulation: 'As Antoninus [one of his official names], my city and fatherland is Rome, as a human being it is the universe' (6.44). Elsewhere, we find appeals to himself in his local role (for instance, as 'a statesman, a Roman, and a ruler', 3.5). Alternatively, he cites more universal ideals such as citizenship of the universe, natural law, or the brotherhood of humankind (3.11, 4.3–4, 29), without any sense that these are incompatible with the local role. The implication, in the *Meditations* and elsewhere in Stoic thinking, is that practicing one's local familial and communal way is in itself a viable way of living out one's membership of the community of humankind, provided that we allow this broader outlook and understanding to inform our localized engagements (cf. Gill (2000) 611–15; Reydam-Schils (2005) 84–89).

4. Recurrent Themes and Their Organization

It is worthwhile looking more closely at one of the *Meditations*, to illustrate some of Marcus' characteristic themes and the way he organizes these. This will help us to specify in a different way the relationship of the *Meditations* to earlier Stoic theory and writings in practical ethics. The passage chosen is 3.11, a medium-length chapter (on this chapter, see also Gill (2007a) 179–84, and Hard and Gill (2011) Introduction).

(1) To the preceding pieces of advice, one more should be added: always make a sketch or plan of whatever presents itself to your mind, so as to see what sort of thing it is when stripped down to its essence, as a whole and in its separate parts; and tell yourself its proper name, and the names of the elements from which it has been put together and into which it will finally be resolved. (2) For nothing is as effective in creating greatness of mind as being able to examine methodically and truthfully everything that presents itself in life, and always viewing things in such a way as to consider what kind of use each thing serves in what kind of a universe, and what value it has to human beings as citizens of that highest of cities of which all other cities are, as it were, mere households, (3) and what this object is that presently makes an impression on me, and what it is composed of, and how long it will naturally persist, and what virtue is needed in the face of it, such as gentleness, courage, truthfulness, good faith, simplicity, self-sufficiency, and so forth. (4) So, as each case presents itself, you should say: this has come from god, this from the co-ordination and interweaving of the threads of fate and similar kinds of

coincidence and chance, this from one of my own kind, a relation and companion, who is however ignorant of what is natural for him. (5) But I am not ignorant of that, and thus I will therefore treat him kindly and justly, according to the natural law of companionship, though aiming at the same time at what he deserves with regard to things that are morally indifferent.

This passage offers, first of all, a clear illustration of one of Marcus' most characteristic methods, that of making a 'sketch' or 'outline' of things, and 'stripping' them naked to their essential, ethical, core (e.g. 6.13, 11.2, 12.2). As noted earlier, this seems to represent one of Marcus' versions of the first topic in the typologies of Seneca and Epictetus. The 'stripping' method, in this case, reveals a series of key ideas in earlier Stoic theoretical writing, presented in language which, though non-technical, strongly evokes major Stoic themes. It also brings out the point that these themes are conceived, in Stoic ethics, as naturally interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Here, as elsewhere – and by contrast with Seneca's writings and Epictetus' recorded teachings – Marcus addresses himself directly, couching the ideas in terms of 'I' and 'you' (the latter meaning himself as addressee). However, despite the unusually autobiographical or 'first-personal' format, the content of what is expressed resembles closely what we find in other works of Stoic practical ethics, except in certain features of organization, style, and doctrine brought out more fully later. (On self-address and 'self' in the *Meditations*, see also Chapter 30 in this volume.)

The main themes woven together in this passage are these. One is the distinctive, and controversial, Stoic claim that happiness depends entirely on virtue. The other so-called 'goods' of human life, such as health, wealth, or even the well-being of one's family, are, by contrast with virtue, 'matters of indifference', even if they are also naturally preferable (Long and Sedley (1987) sections 58 and 63). Marcus presents the proper response to any situation as asking himself 'what virtue is needed . . . such as gentleness, courage' (3), and by referring at the end of the passage to the idea that other things regarded as beneficial are 'morally indifferent' (5). The aspiration to respond to each situation in a virtuous way is linked with another key Stoic aspiration. One of the ideal outcomes of the social side of ethical development, noted earlier, is that we should regard any given human being as a 'brother' and 'fellow-citizen' in a world-wide ethical community, an idea twice signaled here (2, 4–5). Thus, Marcus brings out the integral linkage between the two strands in Stoic ethical development, that is, individual (defined in terms of motivation) and social. As it happens, this linkage is not examined fully in any surviving Stoic theoretical work, but it is implied in works of Stoic practical ethics, as illustrated later. Marcus also signals here a related idea, that reminding oneself that other people are fellow-members of the brotherhood of humankind can and should have the effect of modifying your actions and emotional attitudes (4–5). The passage

suggests that thinking of someone in this way should lead Marcus to treat the other person ‘kindly and justly’ as well as providing social or material benefits (‘indifferents’). The idea of a universal ethical community is linked by Marcus with another central Stoic idea. This is that the universe forms a seamless web of interconnected causes, and that the whole nexus of events is pervaded by divine providence (Long and Sedley (1987) sections 54–5, 62). The theme of divine providence within the universe forms one of the main points of linkage between ethics and physics in Stoicism, a linkage which is itself one of the salient features of Stoic philosophy. This theme is a particularly prominent one in the *Meditations*, here signaled in the words, ‘this has come from god, this from the co-ordination and interweaving of the threads of fate ...’ (4).

This passage exemplifies features of the *Meditations* that could be illustrated in many others. The ideas referred to are ones that have a secure place in ancient summaries of Stoic theory, and, presumably, the (lost) treatises on which these are based. Also typically Stoic, and strongly reflected in Marcus’ work, is the belief that the key ideas form a tightly interconnected system within any one branch of philosophy, for instance ethics, and that there are significant points of linkage between different branches of philosophy, notably between ethics and physics (Long and Sedley (1987) sections 26 and 56). However, to see what is distinctive in Marcus’ way of handling such themes, it is useful to compare the *Meditations* with Seneca’s *Letters* and Epictetus’ *Discourses*, especially the latter, since these were so influential on Marcus’ work. Although both these writings are, like the *Meditations*, non-technical and informal in style, there are certain significant differences. For one thing, any one of the various themes woven together into one passage by Marcus is more likely to form the single, or at least main, topic of a Senecan letter or Epictetan discourse. For instance, Epictetus discusses progress towards virtue in *Discourse* 1.4, divine providence in 1.6 and 1.16, and the avoidance of anger (by modifying our beliefs about other people) in 1.18 and 1.28. In each case, as also in Seneca’s letters, Epictetus examines the issues raised by each of these topics in a relatively systematic, or at least, dialectical, way. By contrast, Marcus, referring to comparable themes in 3.11, merely alludes to them, without drawing out their full significance or implications, even though the way that he does so implies an understanding of what that significance is. In this respect, his procedure is in line with his characterization of his own practice noted earlier, when he refers to the ‘concise and basic precepts’ of which he reminds himself as a way of supporting his emotional resilience (4.3.3).

Although Marcus is exceptional in the extent to which he weaves together different themes in a short passage, this does not mean that the themes he connects are not also linked elsewhere in Stoic thought or writings. For instance, I suggested earlier that 3.11 implies a linkage between the two strands of Stoic thinking on ethical development, individual (relating to

types of motivation) and social or interpersonal. Although we have no extant theoretical discussion of this linkage in our – very incomplete – remains of Stoic theory, Epictetus seems to regard making this link as one of the aims of his teaching in practical ethics. For instance, his three-stage typology, outlined earlier, couples critical assessment of ethical value (or distinguishing what is and is not ‘up to us’) in the first stage with adopting the right kind of motivation in our relations to other people in the second stage. What this means is examined in more detail, for instance, in *Discourse* 3.3. Here, Epictetus explores the conflicts that can arise in trying to combine adopting the right kind of ethical motivation and treating other people, for instance one’s family, appropriately. If the two claims can be met simultaneously, then ‘the preservation of such relationships does in itself become a good’ (3.3.8). But, if the two come into conflict, then: ‘My father is nothing to me, only the good’ (3.3.5, translation taken from Hard and Gill (1995)). In this discourse, Epictetus examines ethical training or progress, and part of the treatment consists in drawing out the mutual implications of these two aspects of ethical development (Long (2002) 232–44; Gill (2006) 383–86). The linkage made between these two strands by Marcus in 3.11 (between seeking to act virtuously and treating people as one’s brothers in a world community) is more impressionistic and generalized than we find in Epictetus. But Marcus too seems to presuppose the same theoretical background, and he was probably also familiar with Epictetus’ more fully worked out treatment of this connection.

The distinctive feature of the *Meditations* brought out by this comparison (Marcus’ allusive or visionary style) may help to explain his fondness for some non-Stoic thinkers or motifs associated with them. For instance, as noted earlier, the *Meditations* cite or echo Heraclitus quite often, and also deploy the typically Platonic theme of the view from above. Marcus’ citations of Heraclitus seem partly motivated by the themes they illustrate, namely life as a kind of flux and the hidden underlying pattern in reality (e.g. 4.43, 46, and 6.10; cf. Long (1996) 56–57). But the appeal of Heraclitus may also derive from the fact that his sayings have a dark, oracular quality, encapsulating profound and puzzling ideas in a few words, which Marcus too seems to aim at. A similar point can be made about Marcus’ deployment of the Platonic motif of the view from above. In Plato, this theme is often associated with a kind of abstraction from the world, linked with epistemological or metaphysical idealism, that is not characteristic of Stoic thought (e.g. *Phaedo* 109–11, *Republic* 486a, *Theaetetus* 173e–174a; cf. Rutherford (1989) 155–61). But Marcus, it would seem, adopts the same idiom in a rather different spirit. Partly, this motif serves to support the visionary and generalizing style illustrated in 3.11 and found throughout the *Meditations*. But it also underlines his rejection of the conventional overvaluation of material or social benefits (Stoic ‘indifferents’), and in this respect it reinforces a fundamentally Stoic message (e.g. in 7.48, 9.30, 10.15).

5. Is Marcus Eclectic?

Marcus' citations or echoes of non-Stoic thinkers constitute one of the features that have led scholars to ask how the *Meditations* should be seen as expressing Stoic ideas or rather a kind of eclectic philosophy drawn in a personal way from various sources. In fact, as some recent work has emphasized, eclecticism of this kind is a rare phenomenon in antiquity, and it is more common to find ancient thinkers interpreting in a rather generous or creative way what it means to be, for instance, a Platonic or Stoic thinker. But some aspects of Marcus' writings have aroused special attention from this standpoint, and I consider two of them here, since they raise in a different way the question of Marcus' relationship to previous writings, both Stoic and non-Stoic.

One is his use of psychological language. Marcus sometimes stresses that we are, essentially, our 'governing' center (or mind, *hēgemonikon*), and contrasts this with other parts of our nature, including 'flesh', and, more surprisingly, 'psyche', used to mean 'breath' or 'vitality' (e.g. 2.2, 5.33, 12.3). At first sight, this seems to mark the adoption of Platonic mind-body dualism in a way that is quite inconsistent with the Stoic view that our psychological functions are also bodily ones (Long and Sedley (1987) section 53; Long (1996) ch. 10). But, if we examine the relevant passages more closely, it becomes clear that these passages are making an ethical point. What Marcus is stressing is that the really important aspect of human nature is our rational agency, and, specifically, our capacity as humans to develop towards virtue and to come to regard material and social benefits as 'matters of indifference'. He is not proposing a specific thesis about psychology at all. This is particularly clear in one case (5.26) where Marcus combines what looks at first glance like dualistic language with a re-assertion of the standard Stoic view that we are unified psychophysical wholes. In fact, we find the same feature in Epictetus' *Discourses*, and the explanation seems to be the same (e.g. 1.3.3, 5, 2.22.19; cf. Gill (2006) 96–100, (2007a) 176–79, (2007b)). The moralistic thrust of the writings leads the thinkers to deploy psychological phraseology whose full theoretical implications they would not endorse.

The second feature of Marcus' practice is more puzzling, and has given rise to much scholarly discussion in recent years. Although in general, like Epictetus, Marcus assumes the validity of the Stoic providential world-view (e.g. 2.3, 4, 9, 14), he also sometimes poses the question 'providence or atoms?'. That is, he asks which world-view is true: the Stoic view that the universe is pervaded by divine, providential care or the Epicurean one that it is the random outcome of collisions between atoms (Long and Sedley (1987) 13 and 54). This feature raises from another standpoint the question how the *Meditations* are related to earlier Stoic and non-Stoic writings.

It is significant that, in 4.3, this theme is listed by Marcus as one of the ‘brief and fundamental precepts’ that he can draw on to support his emotional resilience. As he puts it, ‘But perhaps you are discontented with what is allotted to you from the whole? Then call to mind the alternative “providence or atoms”, and all the proofs that the universe should be regarded as a constitutional state’ (4.3.5). The clear implication is that he regards the question as settled, at the philosophical level, and that he uses the question as a way of reminding himself of the Stoic position and thus of providing the emotional support that this belief provides. Some at least of Marcus’ uses of this motif in the *Meditations* match this attitude (e.g. 4.27, 6.10, 11.18, and perhaps 9.39). He does not in these cases re-examine the basis in physics for re-asserting the Stoic view. Rather, he re-asserts the validity of the idea of providence on the grounds of its compatibility with Stoic ethical principles that he does not question. In another group of passages, Marcus uses the ‘providence or atoms?’ theme as a way of suggesting that, despite their different world-views, Stoics and Epicureans converge in recognizing that death is an event whose inevitability we must accept and not fear (e.g. 6.24, 8.25). Elsewhere, Marcus shows that he is willing to accept that Epicureanism, as well as Stoicism, can offer sound ethical advice, for instance, on enduring physical pain (7.33, 64, 9.41, 12.34). A readiness to acknowledge the validity of Epicurean ethical ideals, when they overlap with Stoic ones, is also a feature of Seneca’s *Letters* (Annas (2004) 109–10; Cooper (2004) 338–46).

So far, Marcus’ treatment of this theme has not proved as problematic as one might have expected. But there are two cases at least (6.44 and 12.14) which are more puzzling. Here Marcus leaves the question of the validity of the world-view open, but still suggests that he has the intellectual and emotional resources to face the demands of life with equanimity. As he puts it in 12.14:

Either necessity and an order that cannot be overstepped or a providence that can be appeased or an ungovernable confusion of randomness. So if a necessity that cannot be overstepped, why resist it? If a providence that allows itself to be appeased, make yourself worthy of help from the divine. And if a leaderless confusion, be glad that in such a storm you have in yourself a mind that gives leadership. And if the storm carries you off, it may carry off the poor flesh, the breath and the rest; but the mind it will not carry off.

Here, as in 6.44, Marcus does not actually re-affirm the validity of the Stoic world-view, but still seems to see himself as justified in having confidence in the power of his own mind and the ethical principles he maintains (formulated in 6.44 in clearly Stoic terms). Scholars have interpreted this puzzling stance in various ways: Marcus was intellectually confused; he thought ethical principles could be uncoupled from accounts of the natural order; Stoicism had become a kind of religion or quasi-existential stance for Marcus, rather than a fully argued

philosophical system. (For these views, see, respectively, Cooper (2004) 353–63; Annas (2004) 114–16; Rist (1982) 43; Asmis (1989) 2252.) Regardless of which of these explanations we adopt, we can see in Marcus’ treatment of this theme certain more general features of his approach. Despite his stress on the presence of providential order in the universe, the overwhelming focus in the *Meditations* is on ethics. Even when he discusses features of the natural world taken on its own, he tends to introduce a moralizing stance, sometimes inappropriately (6.14, 11.20; cf. Gill (2007b) 200–204). Relevant too is the fact that, as Marcus himself acknowledges, his technical understanding of physics and logic (as distinct from ethics) is limited (1.17.22, 7.67). In line with this, in his treatment of the ‘providence or atoms?’ theme, whether or not he re-affirms the validity of the Stoic world-view, he does not examine for himself the arguments for the world-view, but concentrates on the moral implications, as he conceives these.

The ‘providence or atoms?’ theme, at least as found in these two passages (6.44, 12.14), represents the furthest point that Marcus reaches in questioning Stoic ideas or in adopting an eclectic stance. In other respects, his *Meditations* seem to be securely based on Stoic theory, especially the core principles of Stoic ethics, even if his way of formulating these principles is sometimes non-standard. In particular, his work makes best sense when taken in the context of Stoic writings in practical ethics in the first and second century AD, especially Epictetus’ *Discourses*. Though exceptional in form and in the nature of their authorship, they can be seen achieving their aim of offering a vivid encapsulation of Stoic ethics in a way that offers Marcus – and can also offer us – powerful emotional support in life’s vicissitudes.

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CHAPTER 25

Marcus Aurelius on Physics

David Sedley

1. Marcus' Cosmos

Continually, and if possible with every impression you get, think as a physicist (*physiologeîn*), a psychologist, a dialectician. (8.13)¹

In reminding himself to apply physical thinking to every idea he entertains, Marcus captures a vital aspect of his meditations. The question what part physics plays in Stoic ethics has been a frequent subject of modern debate. In Marcus we may find no theoretical answer to that question, but we get to see, worked out in practice, his recognition that reflection on how the cosmos functions is an absolutely integral part of the Stoic moral life. Throughout his reflections on human values, he can be seen constantly turning to the cosmos as a concept to think *with*.

Marcus' cosmos or world is recognizably and indeed technically Stoic. It is a single, finite, cohesive organism, surrounded by void. Partly as a consequence, it is entirely self-contained and cohesive in its functioning, internally governed by the inexorable sequence of causes known as 'fate'. So far as its underlying constitution is concerned, it is composed out of two ultimate items, of which one is a pliable material substrate, and the other, acting upon this, a single intelligent divine causal power, sometimes identified with its 'seminal reason' (*spermatikos logos*). The first of these, matter, is formed into the four traditional elements, namely earth, water, air, and fire. These elements mix to form compound beings like us, but also, in separation, constitute the four great cosmic masses that serve as the major zones of the world: the earth, surrounded in turn by water, the atmosphere, and finally the fiery heavens. The rational human soul, constituted from two of the four elements, is warm air or 'breath' (*pneuma*):

it may or may not survive the death of the body, but at all events it is not such as to endure for ever, and instead must be swallowed up into the whole.

Stoic though it is, this picture contains anomalies too. Connate *pneuma*, a mixture of air and fire, is for Marcus just the transient stuff of the soul. It is no longer, as it had been in the school's classical doctrine under Chrysippus (third century BC) and his successors, the divine power imbuing all passive matter and endowing it with its qualities. That role is assigned to a separate divine intelligence, found at both the cosmic and the human level, whose precise physical status is left understated.

2. Cosmic Intelligence

The following argument may help us understand what inspired Marcus' deviation from the Stoic norm on this last point:

If intelligence (*to noeron*) is something common to us, then common too is reason, in virtue of which we are rational. If so, also common is the reason which instructs us what to do or not do. If that is so, the law too is common. If so, we are citizens. If that is so, there is some civic institution in which we share. If so, the world is, as it were, our city. For what other common civic institution is anyone going to say the entire human race shares? So it is from there, from this common city, that our intelligence, rationality and lawfulness themselves come.

For just as my earthy part is a fragment of some quantity of earth, and my moisture derived from another element, and my breathy (*pneumatikon*) part from some source, and my hot and fiery part from some source peculiar to it – for nothing comes from nothing, just as nothing vanishes into what-is-not – so too my intelligence (*to noeron*) must come from somewhere. (4.4)

Marcus is undoubtedly drawing heavily on school tradition here. The first half is a chain-syllogism whose style and content alike are thoroughly characteristic of the Stoa. It starts from the uncontroversial premise that we humans share in intelligence, and at the end of the chain infers that we derive our intelligence from the ultimate civic community – not a local city, but the cosmos itself.

The second half supports this conclusion by a quite different argument. The key to its significance lies in recognizing it as part of Marcus' Socratic heritage. Here is the canonical Socratic original, as found in the pages of Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 1.4.8):

Do you think that there is nothing wise anywhere else? And this despite your knowing that there is a lot of earth, of which you have just a little portion

in your body, and a lot of moisture, of which you have just a tiny bit, and that each of the other things too is huge whereas your body has been fitted together by acquiring a tiny portion of them? Yet intelligence alone, it turns out, you think exists nowhere, and that you laid your hands on it by some stroke of luck? And that it is due to some kind of unintelligence that these vast masses of limitless amount are well arranged?

This argument, reported by Xenophon as from the mouth of Socrates, quickly acquired canonical status. It was imitated by Plato (*Philebus* 29a–30d), Aristotle (*Parts of Animals* 1.4, 641b12–15), and the early Stoics (Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos* 9.95, 101). It is also found quoted from memory in at least two Stoic texts (Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos* 9.94; Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.18). There are enough linguistic echoes in Marcus' version to suggest that he is responding to his memory of the Socratic original, not to its later Platonic or Stoic derivatives. This supposition of a direct response to the classic Socratic text may even help explain why Marcus' own version is addressed to himself in the first-person singular instead of his more usual second person. Socrates' own words, which themselves emphatically use the second-person singular, feel like a direct address to Marcus: for example 'Yet intelligence alone, it turns out, you think exists nowhere, and that you laid your hands on it by some stroke of luck?' Marcus duly replies '...my intelligence must come from somewhere'. Here we seem to catch him in direct conversation with Socrates about his own place in the world.

This canonical passage from Xenophon was a virtually unique instance of Socrates, the Stoic school's figurehead, engaging in argument about cosmology, the discipline he was widely represented as having rejected in favor of ethics. To Marcus, a Stoic who makes the cosmos integral to his moral thinking, it is natural that such a text should be of special significance. It may then be especially this classic Socratic dictum that has encouraged Marcus to distinguish intelligence so sharply from *pneuma*, treating it as a distinct and possibly even non-physical item alongside the material elements out of which *pneuma* is constituted.

3. Matter

The outcome is, nevertheless, in broad terms a continuation of the school's traditional dualism of the two ultimate physical principles 'god' and 'matter' (*hylē*), respectively the immanent active force and the passive principle that jointly constitute the entire world-body. The active principle Marcus variously calls 'the commanding-principle' (*to hēgemonikon*), 'intelligence' (*to noeron*), and 'the causal' (*to aitiodes*). In stressing this last aspect Marcus speaks of the

twin principles as respectively ‘the causal’ and ‘the material’ (*to hylikon*), in that regard showing himself fully in tune with imperial Stoicism. For Seneca had already contrasted the hopelessly complicated Platonic-Aristotelian list of causes unfavorably with the explanatory economy of the two Stoic principles, ‘cause and matter’ (*Letters* 65.2). Marcus loyally maintains that simple dualism of ‘the causal’ and ‘the material’ (4.21.3, 5.13, 7.10, 8.11, 12.18).

How about the material half of the same cause–matter duality? Consider first the manifesto of physics contained in the following passage:

To the above resources let one further one be added: always to form an outline account or definition of the item that falls beneath your gaze, so as to see what it is like in its substance (*ousia*), stripped bare and with its fused ingredients separated out, and to say to oneself its individual name, and the names of those things out of which it was compounded and into which it will be resolved ... (3.11)

It is not surprising that *ousia*, the word I have translated ‘substance’, has regularly been rendered ‘essence’ by the translators. We might indeed expect a thing’s definition to expose its essence, and *ousia*, the abstract noun from the Greek verb ‘to be’, typically signifies ‘essence’ in Platonic and Aristotelian usage, often with reference to the highest metaphysical realities. But Marcus is in this regard an orthodox Stoic, using *ousia* as the school always had used it to mean ‘substance’ in the latter word’s now familiar material sense. It is in fact an almost exact Stoic synonym for ‘matter’ (*hylē*, *to hylikon*). That fits not only with Marcus’ regular usage elsewhere, but also with this passage’s further explanation of the kind of definition he is recommending: it is to be one that analyzes the object into its material ingredients. For Marcus, in the long run *you are your ingredients*, and everything else is likewise identical with its material constituents.

4. Flux

Here a contextualization in contemporary philosophical debate may help clarify things. The Platonism of Marcus’ era was seeking, in direct contrast to Stoicism, to return the emphasis to what it saw as true *ousia*, the transcendent Forms. Thus Alcinous’ handbook of Platonism the *Didaskalikos* in its opening chapter represents the philosopher as one who can attain knowledge ‘of that *ousia* which is intelligible, not wandering and fluid (*rheustē*)’ (152.10–11). In insisting on the stability of the philosophically important *ousia*, Alcinous is referring antagonistically to a doctrine of ‘fluid matter’ which was enjoying considerable success at the time and was especially linked to the Stoic school (see Caizzi (1988)). It is in this context that we must place Marcus, a Stoic whose conception of things’ ‘being’ puts nearly all the emphasis on their

material transience. For he in fact shows unexpectedly little interest in the stable essences of physical things, people included.

The point is well illustrated by his revival and adaptation of a classic Stoic argument about flux, one reported to us by Plutarch (*On common conceptions* 1083A–1084A). The ‘Growing Argument’, propounded by the school’s skeptically inclined critics in the New Academy, had maintained that growth is impossible. If growth is to occur, the same item must endure so as to be larger at the end of the process than at the beginning. But during growth a thing cannot possibly endure, since every particle added or subtracted makes it a different lump of matter, and hence a different individual. Hence nothing can grow.

The Stoic answer to this puzzle lay in distinguishing an individual’s matter, at the lowest ontological level, from the ‘peculiarly qualified individual’ (*idiōs poiōs*), e.g. Dion or Theon, who occupies that matter. The matter is radically unstable, owing to ingestion, excretion, and other physiological changes, but the peculiarly qualified individual remains, thanks to the persistence of a uniquely identifying quality, undoubtedly a quality of soul, that characterizes each of us from birth to death. It is therefore the peculiarly qualified individual who can, and does, serve as the proper subject of growth, while it is conceded that matter cannot have that role.

Now consider Marcus’ realignment of this Stoic theory. He starts with a characteristic portrayal of universal cosmic flux, as manifested by the recycling of a human being’s elements after death:

For either there is a scattering of elements from which he was constituted, or a turning of the solid body into earthy stuff and of the breathy part into airy stuff, with the result that these too are taken up into the reason of the whole, whether the whole be periodically consumed in fire, or renewed in an everlasting sequence of exchanges. (10.7.2)

That is, our future material instability takes the form either of random scattering of our constituents (the hypothetical option of atomism, on Marcus’ contemplation of which more below), or, on the more welcome scenario endorsed by Stoicism, their re-absorption by cosmic reason. He then points to the fleetingness of those same elements even during our past lives:

But as for both the solid body and the breathy part, do not imagine that they are the ones he had from the moment of birth. All of that went into flux yesterday and the day before, thanks to the food he ate and the air he breathed. So what is undergoing the change is what he has acquired, and not what his mother gave birth to. Assume that the latter binds you too tightly to the peculiarly qualified individual, which has no bearing, it seems to me, on what we are saying now. (10.7.3)

Marcus is visibly adapting the Stoic metaphysical theory outlined above. According to him, *both* main material constituents of us – not only the solid body but also the pneumatic soul – undergo replacement whenever we eat or breathe. This addition of breath as co-responsible for bodily flux is not found in other Stoic sources addressing the same theme, but it is a natural extension of the theory for Marcus to make (as he does elsewhere too, e.g. 9.36), given the equal stress he places on the impermanence of our body and on the impermanence of the *pneuma* constituting our soul.

Marcus here does not deny the existence of a lifelong enduring self, the ‘peculiarly qualified individual’. He nevertheless minimizes its relevance to his present topic. If it is asked who you are, for present purposes the correct answer does little to identify you with a peculiarly qualified individual, the person bearing your name who came into the world when your mother gave birth. The self currently undergoing change is a different, because differently constituted, entity.

Marcus is technically not contravening orthodox Stoicism here, but he is radically altering its priorities. The fluid material self had been a Stoic concession to the New Academy, compensated by the school’s trump card, the addition of an enduring qualitative self. For Marcus, in a cosmological context the former, fluid self is the one that really counts. For that self is, *sub specie aeternitatis*, both who we truly are, and the aspect of us that will, thanks to elemental redistribution, be most successful in unifying itself with the cosmos.

5. Man and the Cosmos

Marcus constantly recurs to the ubiquity of material flux: ‘substance (*ousia*), like a river, is in continual flow’, he remarks at 5.23, echoing as often the Stoics’ revered forerunner Heraclitus (see Long (1975/6) 153). It is in the light of that physics of fluidity that we can best understand a passage like the following:

A human life: its time a point, its substance (*ousia*) in flux, its perception dim, the composition of its entire body prone to decay, its soul a spinning toy, its fortune hard to predict, its reputation confused. In a nutshell, everything belonging to the body is a river, everything belonging to the soul dream and vanity, its life a war and a foreign residence, its posthumous reputation oblivion. What then can be its escort through life? Nothing but philosophy. This consists in keeping one’s inner spirit (*daimōn*) unviolated and unharmed . . . , accepting what befalls and is dealt to it as coming from that place from which it itself came, and in all matters awaiting death with a satisfied mind, as being nothing other than the dissolution of the elements out of which each animal is compounded. If for the elements themselves there is nothing terrible in each one’s continually changing into another, why should anyone look askance at the change and dissolution of everything? For it is natural, and nothing bad is natural. (2.17)

This sequence of sentiments, quintessentially characteristic of Marcus, illustrates how in his meditations physical reflections are an integral part of the overall fabric, and not, as might have been understood from the structure of the school's formal curriculum, a separate area of philosophy.

In his minimization of human life's ultimate significance, exemplified by the above passage, the material elements with their utterly compliant participation in nature's processes are a model for human beings to emulate and even envy. He is thus able to invoke them as a paradigm for the Stoic moral ideal of 'living in agreement with nature'. For, as he ruefully points out elsewhere, the *only* thing in the cosmos that can be seen perversely resisting the plan of nature is the human intellect:

The breathy part of you and all the fiery stuff mixed in with you, although their nature is to move upwards, nevertheless obey the ordering of the universe and are confined here in the compound. So too all the earthy and the moist stuff in you, although they are such as to move downwards, are nevertheless roused up and maintain the static position which is not their own natural one. In this way, then, even the elements obey the universe, and whenever they are stationed somewhere they stay put under compulsion until the signal for dissolution issues from that other place. Is it not then terrible that only your intelligent part is disobedient and resents its own location? Yet nothing violent is imposed on it, merely things that are natural for it – things which it nevertheless does not tolerate, but instead moves in the opposed direction. For its movement towards injustices, self-indulgences, anger, grief and fears is precisely the mark of something abandoning its own nature. And when the commanding-principle is disgruntled at some event, then too it abandons its proper place, for it has been constituted for holiness and reverence no less than for justice. (11.20)

In his emphasis on the compliance of the four cosmic elements, Marcus is consciously or unconsciously resisting contemporary Platonism. Whether or not it is prefigured in Plato's *Timaeus*, as it is widely if questionably thought to be, the idea had certainly gained currency among Platonists that matter is to some extent resistant to the divine will, and hence is the cause of imperfection in the world. Stoicism disagreed (Calcidius, *On Plato's Timaeus* 296), regarding matter as fully compliant, and thus vindicating the world's perfection. Marcus is therefore voicing Stoic orthodoxy when he writes (6.1):

The substance (*ousia*) of the universe is obedient and pliable, and the reason which governs it has in itself no cause for doing bad, since it lacks badness: it does nothing bad, and nothing is harmed by it.

The cosmos itself – viewed in contradistinction to our own role in it – can thus serve us as a model of laudable compliance, founded on co-operation

between its component elements and its governing reason. Badness enters the world at the level of human intellect, precisely through its failure to emulate this cosmic harmony.

It is not only in terms of compliant co-operation that the world sets standards for us. It is also, in more ways than one, a model of rational order.

First, when you are tempted to complain at this or that apparent cosmic imperfection, remind yourself of the world's superhuman orderliness when it comes to recycling:

The cucumber is sour? Throw it away. There are brambles in your path? Go round them. That is enough, without your adding 'And why did these things even come to be in the world?' For a physicist will laugh at you, in the way that a carpenter and a shoemaker would laugh at you for complaining that in their workshop you can see shavings and offcuts of their products. On the other hand, they at least have somewhere to throw these, whereas the nature of the universe has nothing outside itself, and the wonder of its craft is that, having set limits upon itself, it takes all the things inside itself that seem to decay, to age and to be useless, and changes them into itself, and that from these very things it recreates other, fresh ones, so that it will never need either substance (*ousia*) from outside, or some further place to jettison its refuse. It finds sufficiency in its own space, its own matter, and its own distinctive craft. (8.50)

Thoroughly Stoic though this praise of cosmic order is in spirit, its actual parentage is Platonic. It was Plato in the *Timaeus*, a text much revered by Stoics, who had praised the world's self-sufficient recycling system (33c–34a). Although the Stoics must broadly agree, Marcus' explanation of the need for total recycling, 'the nature of the universe has nothing outside itself', is less appropriate for his own Stoic physics, which unlike Plato surrounds the world with void (11.1.2) – a perfect dumping ground for waste products, one might have imagined. This can be seen as one of the occasional reminders in Marcus' text that technical school orthodoxy is not of paramount importance to him.

6. Cosmic Hierarchy

A second way in which Marcus' outlook on the cosmos is inherently teleological lies in his characteristically Stoic appreciation of its hierarchical structure.

The intelligence of the universe is communal. For it has made inferior beings for the sake of superior ones, and has harmonized the superior ones with each other. You can see how it has subordinated, has co-ordinated, and has assigned to everything what accords with its value, and brought the dominant beings into mutual concord. (5.30)

Elsewhere this hierarchical ordering of nature is fleshed out with greater technicality, in terms of the *scala naturae* that was a central plank of Stoic physics (e.g. 6.14, 9.9.2). The relative values of different beings is expressed in terms of different tensional states: ‘Most of the things that the crowd admires belong at the most generic level to things held together by tenor (*hexis*) or nature (*physis*): stones, logs, figs, vines, olives’ (6.14). This refers initially to the lowest ontological class of discrete beings, such as stones, whose internal *pneuma*, in a state of tension termed *hexis*, is enough to give them cohesion and basic physical characteristics, but nothing more; and then to the next class up, characterized by *physis* and corresponding roughly to the plant kingdom, with such basic vital powers as growth, but no consciousness. The next class up on the Stoic scale we know to be that marked by ‘soul’ (*psychē*), and Marcus does indeed now progress to those items, this time injecting some evaluative distinctions that may well be his own:

The things admired by people who are somewhat superior belong to those held together by soul, such as flocks, herds, or the possession of slaves by sheer quantity. The things admired by people who are still more refined belong to those held together by rational soul, not *qua* rational but *qua* possessing a skill or other ability. However, one who honours a rational and political soul no longer concerns himself with those others, but above all preserves his own soul in rational and communal states and processes, and for this end collaborates with one who is of the same kind. (6.14, continued)

The basic schema is still being drawn directly from Stoic physics, including now the distinction between possessors of mere soul and possessors of rational soul. But Marcus has incorporated a hierarchy of further ways in which soul can be evaluated: (1) souls, whether rational or irrational, may be valued merely quantitatively, as when a herd of cattle or gang of slaves is prized as a possession; (2) a rational soul may be valued for a non-moral ability; (3) a rational soul may be valued as an essentially moral agent. These refinements are then exploited, at the end, to emphasize that the distinction of moral from non-moral agents outclasses all the other distinctions that nature has bequeathed. Once more, the degree of integration between physical and ethical theory is remarkable.

7. ‘Providence or Atoms’

Despite his repeated appeals to Stoic teleology, on many occasions (e.g. 6.4, 6.10, 7.32, 7.50, 8.17, 9.28, 9.39, 10.5–6 [see endnote], 11.18.1; cf. also the opening of 10.7.2, quoted above, p. 400) Marcus seriously entertains the possibility that it is not after all the providential Stoic system but the

randomness of Epicurean atomism that in fact operates in the universe, atomism being famous above all for its exclusion of divine government and purpose from the world. ‘Either providence or atoms’, as he typically expresses it. Sometimes this disjunction is followed by clear arguments in favor of the former option, but at other times the tone is more neutral, the apparent message being that on either hypothesis there is some comfort to be drawn. The most forthright statement of this dilemma for the physicist reads as follows:

Either whirlpool, interplay and scattering, or unification, order and providence. If the former, what desire do I even have to prolong my stay in such a random conglomeration and mishmash? What concern do I have other than how to become dust? Why am I even upset? For whatever I do, my day of scattering will come. But if the other is the case, I am reverent, stable, and confident in the governing power. (6.10)

We may wish to interpret this as Marcus’ merely hypothetical fallback position. *Even if* Stoicism’s uplifting providentialism were false, and nothing more than the unplanned chain-reactions of atomic physics governed the universe, there would be nothing actively disquieting to confront us. Perhaps there would be nothing positive to live for,² but at least the imminence of one’s own material dissolution would not be unwelcome. Here he is tacitly assuming as valid the Epicurean arguments, familiar to us from Lucretius’ book 3, that a purely atomic construction of the human body and soul means that death is the mere loss of all consciousness, and consequently nothing to fear.

However, it must be admitted that the above use of ‘*Even if*...’ does not capture the remarkable neutrality with which Marcus often expresses the dilemma between Stoic and Epicurean physics. Moreover, he is ready to invoke the same evenly balanced disjunction in making other ethical points too, for example with regard to the irrationality of blaming forces outside oneself:

If it is in your own power, why are you doing it? If it is in another’s power, whom are you blaming: the atoms, or the gods? Both responses are crazy. You should blame no one. (8.17)

In such cases, the disjunctive arguments are not noticeably different in their even-handed tone from those which Marcus occasionally advances even within the confines of inter-Stoic debate. I have in mind here those occasions when he is seen avoiding a firm commitment regarding issues on which major Stoics had disagreed. One example is the question whether, in line with the school’s early doctrine, the world proceeds in an endlessly repeated cycle, punctuated by periodic resolutions into pure fire, or, as Panaetius (late second century BC) among others had preferred to hold, it is eternal, following a single linear

trajectory (10.7.2 quoted above, p. 400; cf. 5.13). Other such issues are the question, on which the evidence for early Stoicism is ambiguous at best, as to whether divine care is bestowed on individuals or merely represents a providential system set up at the beginning by god (9.28), and the debate as to whether the soul survives bodily death for some time or perishes with the body (4.21). Faced with such unresolved issues in Stoic physics, Marcus tends to leave both competing hypotheses open, stressing that the choice between them makes no ultimate difference.

His unexpected openness to Epicurean physics as an alternative to the Stoic model reads as if it were an extension of this same policy, despite the obvious difference that he is palpably committed to the truth of Stoicism and hence to the falsity of Epicureanism.

A partial explanation of this much-discussed idiosyncrasy of the *Meditations* may lie in Marcus' overriding commitment to one thesis in particular on which Stoicism and Epicureanism in his eyes really can find some common ground. For Marcus and the atomists alike, each of us is a materially unstable and fleetingly existent actor in the universe's infinitely extended drama. Whether we end our lives in a simple scattering of our atoms, or in material reunification with the cosmos, recognition of our own vanishingly small significance in relation to the bigger picture is a common heritage of the two rival traditions. And that humbling moral, fundamental to Marcus' worldview, is one that the study of the Greek tradition in physics is uniquely qualified to teach us.

NOTES

1. All translations are my own.
2. This may appear to conflict with 10.6: 'Whether atoms or nature, let it first be laid down that I am a part of the whole which nature governs.' But this would amount to a virtual self-contradiction, and I agree with J. Leopold that the opening clause should be repunctuated so as to become the closing words of the preceding aphorism, 10.5. Also sometimes cited as vindicating a Stoic life even in an Epicurean universe is 4.27, but, although its meaning is uncertain, as I read it Marcus is there precisely denying that inner order is possible for someone living in an externally disordered universe (thus too Annas (2004) 108).

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CHAPTER 26

Logic and the *Meditations*

Angelo Giavatto

In the following pages we are going to look for logic in Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*. We will conduct the search in the form of questions, which we will ask of the text and its context, 'context' meaning both philosophical works that Marcus read and the broader intellectual milieu in which he lived and was educated.

1. Approaches to Marcus' Logic

What kind of logic are we supposed to look for in the *Meditations*? Three possibilities may be taken into account:

- (1) Marcus Aurelius' notion of logic, if there is one;
- (2) the notion of logic of the philosophical school which Marcus Aurelius expressed his allegiance to, in other words the Stoic notion of logic;
- (3) our modern notion of logic.

Option 3, one could say, has to be ruled out for evident historiographical reasons; but the modern concept of logic certainly needs to be used as a tool for performing the search itself. For what concerns option 1, even a rapid reading of the *Meditations* would show the absence of an 'Antoninian definition of logic' and more generally of clear statements by Marcus on that part of philosophy, despite some exceptions that we will discuss later. Still, someone may convincingly object that one can possess a personal idea about logic without making any explicit utterance about it: logic, for instance, may be present in one's mind as a tool and a *modus operandi* for discussing other subject matters, which concern, for example, physics or ethics. Eventually, option 2 seems to be the most reasonable alternative, since Stoicism may undoubtedly be considered the philosophical reservoir in which Marcus found

the answers to his philosophical needs. Nevertheless, a reasonable objection could be that Marcus did not necessarily have to endorse – and discuss in the *Meditations* – this *entire* reservoir: he could have picked up only those themes and philosophical issues that lay at his heart. Throughout our analysis we will observe that each option and its corresponding objection are useful for our purpose and all worth discussing. In general, our method will result in a balanced mixture of all three different paths.

2. Which Logic for Marcus?

At the end of the first book, while listing those aspects of his life experience that he wants to thank the gods for, after having stated that he received remedy for spitting blood and fits of giddiness in his dreams, Marcus writes:

(From the gods: . . .) that, when I set my heart on philosophy, I did not fall into the hands of a sophist, nor sat down at the author's desk, or became a solver of syllogisms, nor busied myself with physical phenomena. (1,17,22, trans. Haines) [T1]

The reference to syllogisms is clearly not an enthusiastic one. From the historiographical viewpoint, then, one could use this passage to confirm the idea, according to which imperial Stoicism can be characterized by the rejection of logic and by a strong focus only on ethical matters. If we endorse this view, we should say – taking up point 2 of the previous paragraph – that Marcus used the philosophical reservoir provided by Stoicism *partially*, that he dismissed logic and concentrated on the other two (or one of the two) parts that, according to the Stoics, form philosophy: physics and ethics. If this was true, our search for logic in the *Meditations* would be hopeless (see Barnes (1997) 1–11).

Another way of seeing things may nevertheless be possible and worth trying. We shall start from [T1] itself. After having mentioned the syllogisms and thanking the gods for having avoided getting too involved in them, Marcus adds that he is also thankful for the fact that he has not been *busied with physical phenomena*. This assertion, if interpreted like the previous one on syllogisms, i.e. as a form of *rejection* of that particular philosophical subject, would be disturbingly inconsistent with the widespread presence of discussions about the structure and the functioning of the universe within the *Meditations*: in other words, inconsistent with his statements on physics (see Chapter 25 in this volume). In addition, this ‘dismissive’ attitude would not only involve physics: ‘From Rusticus: . . . not to run off into zeal for rhetoric, writing on speculative themes, discoursing on edifying texts, exhibiting in fanciful colours the ascetic or the philanthropist’ (1,7,2, trans. Farquharson) [T2]. ‘Think continually how many physicians have died, after often knitting their foreheads over their

patients; ... how many philosophers after endless debate on death or survival after death' (2,48,1, trans. Farquharson) [T3]. In both texts Marcus seems to dismiss any form of sympathy for some intellectual fields (rhetoric, moral edification), philosophical subjects (reflection on death and 'afterlife') or even moral attitudes (philanthropy), which he actually practiced and which are widespread throughout the entire *Meditations*. But, other than in the case of the rejection of logic in [T1], these texts show more clearly that Marcus is not criticizing those subjects or attitudes *per se*, but rather the 'zeal' and 'exhibition' ([T2]) of and 'endless debate' ([T3]) about them, as he calls it. The next two texts will help to completely understand this attitude and to avoid the risk of inconsistency between 'rejection' and actual 'practice' that we certainly stated in the case of physical phenomena and rhetoric in [T1–3]; and that could be a key to interpreting Marcus' approach to logic.

Nothing is more wretched than the man who goes round and round everything, and, as Pindar says, 'searches the bowels of the earth', and seeks by conjecture to sound the minds of his neighbours, but fails to perceive that it is enough to abide with the Divinity that is within himself and to do him genuine service. Now the service is to keep Him unsullied by passion, trifling, and discontent with what comes from God or men. (2,13,1–2, trans. Farquharson) [T4]

Nature did not so blend you with the compound Whole that she did not permit you to circumscribe yourself and to bring what is its own into submission to itself. Always bear this in mind, and further that to live the blessed life rests upon very few conditions; and do not, just because you have abandoned hope of being a dialectician or a physician, on this account despair of being free, modest, sociable, and obedient to God. (7,67, trans. Farquharson modified) [T5]

Pindar's quotation at the beginning of [T4] (fr. 292 Snell-Maehler, also quoted, among others, by Plato in *Theaetetus* 173e) clearly refers to the critical attitude towards physical discussions already observed in [T1]. The rest of the text offers a precious addition: it is useless to dedicate oneself to physical discussions, if one does not understand that it is actually *enough* (*arkêê*, in Greek) to respect the divine part in oneself, which corresponds to integrity of emotions and acceptance of reality as it is. *Enough* for what? Certainly to live a philosophically decent life, as it was Marcus' aim by writing the *Meditations*. This line of thought may be further articulated with the help of [T5]: man (and Marcus in particular) should be completely aware of his own limits and try to accomplish his fulfillment as a rational being (i.e. 'being free, modest, sociable, and obedient to God') even if he was forced to renounce a particular study, like being a dialectician and a physician. Since 'dialectician' corresponds to our notion of 'logician', this text brings us to the crucial question of the present chapter. The idea expressed in [T5] – one may be able to be a

philosophically good man *even if* forced to renounce dialectic and physics – means that Marcus *admits* that he did not manage to be a professional dialectician and physician (because of his duties as emperor, one may add), but it certainly does not mean that he *rejected* both physics and logic/dialectic as useless for philosophical progress. On the contrary, ‘comforting’ himself regarding this intellectual lack shows how meaningful those parts were in Marcus’ image of philosophy.

A brief but important chapter will allow us to draw some provisional conclusions: ‘Continually and, if possible, on the occasion of every impression, test it by natural science, by psychology, by logic’ (8,13, trans. Farquharson modified) [T6]. There seems to be no form of rejection of any ‘part’ of philosophy in the *Meditations*. Marcus endorses the traditional Stoic partition of philosophy into logic, physics, and ethics (see Long and Sedley (1987) section 26), contextualizing the theoretical effort to the ethico-practical goal of the *Meditations* [T6]. What Marcus firmly and explicitly rejects is any intellectual and even simple mental activity *when it is done for its own sake and distant from the philosophical progress*: rhetoric and edifying reflections ([T2]), meditations on afterlife ([T3]), physics ([T1, 3–4]), *and* logic ([T1]). On the other hand he admits that his own philosophical *curriculum* is incomplete and tries to persuade himself that this should not leave him hopeless about the possibility of working with himself on his philosophical progress [T5].

3. Dialectic Virtue and Dialectic for Virtue

In the previous paragraph we established two points that help understanding both the presence and the function of logic in the *Meditations*: firstly, that logic, like any other intellectual activity, is only worth studying and using, if it directly contributes to the philosophical progress aiming at being a decent and sociable man (see in particular [T4]); secondly, that Marcus, while recognizing the role of dialectic in the complete ‘practice-oriented’ philosophical *curriculum* ([T6]), admits that he does not have the professional competence for this part of philosophy, as was also the case for physics ([T5]). Nevertheless, as stated above, we know that physical discussions are widespread in the *Meditations*, above all statements about the structure of the universe (see e.g. 10,7), human destiny after death (see e.g. 4,21), and the relationships between the different living creatures (see e.g. 11,18,1–2). In these texts, Marcus demonstrates a strict coherence with what we have stated above: physical subjects are never discussed *per se*, but always with regard to their contribution to Marcus’ effort to become a decent man, happy with things as they are (on this use of physics see Hadot (1972)). A small but vivid example will confirm this: ‘On Death: either dispersal, if we are compounded of atoms; or if we are a living

unity, either extinction or a change of above' (7,32, trans. Farquharson) [T7]. The contribution of this apparently pure physical alternative to self-improvement can be understood through a comparison with its twin chapter in Book 6:

Alexander the Great and his stable boy were levelled in death, for they were either taken into the same life-giving principle of the Universe or were scattered without distinction into atoms. (6,24, trans. Farquharson) [T8]

Here the discussion of [T7] is explicitly contextualized in an observation, which entails an ethico-practical value: honor and power shall not be sought, since human nature is not ennobled by them and death is the clearest event, which shows their uselessness for trying to distinguish oneself from other men. This is, I believe, the way in which not only physics but also logic is present in the *Meditations*: Marcus, after having admitted (and accepted) his incomplete acquaintance with this part of philosophy, tries, as he did with physics, to profit from *that, even modest, logico-dialectical knowledge* he has as a contribution to his ethico-practical goal. The logic competences of Marcus, one has to say, are less substantial than his knowledge of physics, but they still need to be observed from this positively instrumental perspective.

But there is something more. The confrontation with logic that we have been observing until now seems to concern what Marcus himself calls 'syllogisms' in [T1], i.e. the *technical* part of logic. If we use a collection of Stoic fragments as a touchstone, for instance that of Long and Sedley (1987) – but see also the extensive Hülser (1987) in four volumes – we may actually confirm that the *Meditations* lacks the discussion of technical sections of Stoic dialectic, in particular that of definition and division (although in 3,11 there is one), semantics and theory of meaning, theory of propositions – the distinction between simple and non-simple ones – different kinds of arguments, fallacy and modality (on these sections of Stoic dialectic see Bobzien (1986), (1996), and (2003) as well as Frede (1974)). This is also confirmed when reading the Stoic definition of dialectic (for which see Gourinat (2000) 19–107):

Some [Stoic philosophers] say that the logical part [of philosophy] is divided into two sciences, rhetoric and dialectic [a]. Certain of them also divide it into the branch concerned with definitions and that which deals with yardsticks and criteria; but some cut out the branch to do with definitions. They adopt the one concerned with yardsticks and criteria as a means to the discovery of the truth, since they there establish the differences between impressions [b]; the one to do with definitions likewise for discovery of the truth, since things are grasped through conceptions; rhetoric, since it is the science of speaking well in regard to continuous discourses [a¹]; and dialectic, since it is the science of correct discussion in regard to discourses conducted by question and answer [c], so that they also define it as the science of what is true and false and neither [of these]

[d]. ... Dialectic, they say, is divided into the topics of significations and utterance [e]; and that of significations into the topics of impressions [b¹] and derivatively subsistent sayables – propositions, complete sayables, predicates and similar actives and passives, genera and species, along with also arguments, argument modes and syllogisms, and sophisms which depend on utterance and on state of affairs [f]. (Diogenes Laertius 7,41–43, trans. Long and Sedley) [T9]

But while confirming the incompleteness of Marcus' logical curriculum (for what concerns points [d], i.e. truth value, [e] and [f]), this text provides a more articulated concept of dialectic as the one that corresponds to 'syllogisms'. Firstly, one might be surprised to observe that even rhetoric is a part of logic for the Stoics ([a] and [a¹]). We will not discuss rhetoric in the *Meditations*, but we may limit ourselves to observing that rhetoric was an essential part of Marcus' education and that the *Meditations* itself is a writing in which Marcus substantiates his philosophical need for self-instruction with rhetorical persuasiveness (see Chapter 21 in this volume). Particularly interesting are [b] and [c]: we will come back to [b] – the ability of discerning impressions – in § 4; [c] concerns the traditional dialectical exchange, organized as a succession of questions and answers: this approach to philosophical and dialectical discussions must be considered the core of the *Meditations* itself, which is structured as a self-dialogue. This dialogue has mostly the form of an injunction rather than that of a dialectical confrontation, but the question-and-answer paradigm nevertheless plays an essential role, as becomes obvious in the following example:

If you cancel your judgement about what seems to pain you, you yourself stand firm on surest ground. 'What is self?' 'Reason.' 'But I am not reason.' 'Granted; then do not let reason itself trouble itself, but if some other part of you is harmed, let it form its own judgement about itself.' (8,40, trans. Farquharson) [T10]

Although it is structured as a dialogue, this chapter does not offer a pure school answers-questions confrontation example, since Marcus is using the dialogue in order to *discuss* and *assimilate* a concept that he considers important for his philosophical progress (see also 5,6,5–8 and 6,21).

Further details of the Stoic conception of dialectic provide us with even more material for understanding the presence of logic in the *Meditations*:

They [the Stoics] take dialectic itself to be necessary, and a virtue that incorporates specific virtues [i]. Non-precipitancy is the science of when one should and should not assent [ii]. Uncarelessness is a strong rational principle against the plausible, so as not to give in to it [iii]. Irrefutability is strength in argument, so as not to be carried away by argument into the contradictory [of one's own thesis] [iv]. Non-randomness is a tenor that refers impressions to the correct rational principle [v]. And scientific knowledge itself, they say, is either secure cognition or a tenor in the

reception of impressions which is unchangeable by reason [vi]. Without the study of dialectic the wise man will not be infallible in argument, since dialectic distinguishes the true from the false, and clarifies plausibilities and ambiguous statements [vii]. Without it too it is impossible to ask and answer questions methodically [viii]. Precipitancy in assertions extends to what actually happens; so people who do not have their impressions trained veer into states of disorder and carelessness [ix]. Only in this way will the wise man show himself to be penetrating, sharp-witted and someone who, quite generally, is formidable in argument [x]. (Diogenes Laertius 7,46–48, trans. Long and Sedley) [T11] (see also § 83)

This text confirms some points that we have already discussed, in particular the questions-answers model ([vii], [viii], and [x]) and the connection between propositions and reality ([ix]). But the first part of it illuminates a further meaning of dialectic for the Stoics, namely its contribution to virtue or, even better, the fact that dialectic *is* a virtue itself ([i]; on this topic see Long (1978); Gourinat (2000) 69–87; Bénatouïl (2006); and Giavatto (2008) 65–88). The virtues that it incorporates are not only connected with the ‘technical’ part of logic (as it is the case for [vi]), but, more broadly, with the knowledge of reality ([iii], [v], [vi]) and with the right behavior ([ii]): both these concepts are the core of Marcus’ philosophical agenda. Not surprisingly, one will thus observe that he discusses at least some of the dialectic virtues listed in this text: the concept of ‘non-precipitancy’ (*apromptōsia*), for instance, appears in 3,9,2, where it is connected with friendship with other men and obedience to the gods, 4,49,5; 7,55,5 and 11,10,4, where precipitancy is an obstacle to justice; for uncarelessness (*aneikaiotēs*) see 2,5,2; 2,13,2; 12,14,1.

The idea of an intellectual virtue that assures control over reality and solidness in choices and actions is immanent in the *Meditations*. The most significant expression of this idea is the description of Antoninus Pius in the first book; for the adoptive father of Marcus Aurelius is that human being he mostly tends to describe as a sage person (see also 6,30):

From my father (by adoption): . . . unshaken resolution in judgements taken after full consideration . . . Exact scrutiny in council and patience; not that he was avoiding investigation, satisfied with first impressions. . . . temperance in all things and firmness . . . Nowhere harsh, merciless, or blustering, nor so that you might ever say ‘to fever heat’, but everything nicely calculated and divided into its times, as by a leisured man; no bustle, complete order, strength, consistency. (1,17, trans. Farquharson) [T12]

Control over thought and its articulations, as well as over the epistemological contents that substantiate it, is both the ultimate goal of logic in the Stoic version of it and the aim of Marcus’ philosophical training by means of his *Meditations*.

4. Dialectic and Epistemology

In [T11] we read that there is a striking connection between logic as the Stoics conceived it and knowledge of reality (see points [iii], [v], [vi]). In fact, a significant manner in which dialectic expresses its presence in the *Meditations* is its connection with epistemology (see Lievegoed (1924); Hadot (1998) 101–27; and Giavatto (2008) 31–63):

As are your repeated impressions so will your mind be, for the soul is dyed by its impressions. Dye it, then, in a succession of impressions like these: for instance, ‘where it is possible to live, there it is possible to live well: but it is possible to live in a palace, *ergo* it is also possible to live well in a palace’. Or once more: ‘that for which each creature was made, to this it tends: and to what it tends, in this is its end: and where its end is, there is the advantage and the good alike of each creature: therefore fellowship is the good of a reasonable creature’. For it has been proved long ago that we are born for fellowship; or was it not plain that the inferior creatures are in the interest of the superior, the superior of one another? But the animate are superior to the inanimate and the reasoning to the merely animate. (5,16, trans. Farquharson modified) [T13]

We can deduce several points from this text:

thinking is (or, to be more precise, thoughts are) determined by impressions; the verb *phantazein* and the noun *phantasia* have the very general meaning of ‘impression either coming from outside or created by the mind itself’ here; this is a concept drawn from Stoic epistemology, in which the notion of impression plays a key role (see for instance frs. 2,52–70 of Arnim (1903–1905) or section 39 of Long and Sedley (1987)); individuals have the ability to create impressions, capable of determining their thoughts; such impressions are propositional in nature; to put it another way, they have a verbal dimension; thoughts are created through frequent and repeated (as indicated by *pollakis*, ‘often’, and *synekheia*, ‘continuous succession’) contact with the soul, which is ‘dyed’ or ‘colored’ by impressions; these propositional impressions, which determine thoughts by repetition are formulated in a syllogistic manner; they therefore reveal a demonstrative purpose.

This latter point is confirmed by the two examples of *phantasia* put forward by Marcus Aurelius. Let us consider the first: ‘where it is possible to live, there it is possible to live well: but it is possible to live in a palace, *ergo* it is also possible

to live well in a palace'. The rest of the work spells out the biographical background of this statement: in fact Marcus Aurelius repeats on several occasions (1,17,5; 6,12 and 8,9) that he would have preferred to devote his life to philosophy rather than his duties as emperor. Clearly this is a proposition of the type 'if A, B; but A, therefore B'. The term A is particularized in the second premise (from all possible places to the court, hence from the general to the particular). I would like to highlight the extremely rigorous formulation indicated by the particles *de*, 'on the other hand', and *ara*, 'therefore', this latter being the particle of inference *par excellence* in Greek. In terms of logic we are dealing with a case of *modus ponendo ponens*, the first indemonstrable syllogism posited by the Stoics (cf. Diogenes Laertius 7,80 and Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 8,224). The practical ethical purpose of the *Meditations*, i.e. how Marcus Aurelius should lead his life, is determined by a notion *drawn from the domain of dialectic*. The second example is more complicated: it starts with a sorites (a chain inference), in which the assumption in the final train of reasoning is presented as the result of a previous demonstration ('For it has been proved long ago that we are born for fellowship'). So, to be as clear as possible, Marcus Aurelius provides us with an additional explanation for this assumption.

5. Dialectic in Practice: Further Examples

In [T13] we have already detected two elementary forms of arguments: the first Stoic indemonstrable (corresponding to the *modus ponendo ponens*) and the sorites. A sorites-like discussion may also be found in the following text:

If mind is common to us all, then also the reason, whereby we are reasoning beings, is common. If this be so, then also the reason which enjoins what is to be done or left undone is common. If this be so, law also is common; if this be so, we are citizens; if this be so, we are partakers in one constitution; if this be so, the Universe is a kind of Commonwealth. For in what other common government can we say that the whole race of men partakes? And thence, from this common City, is derived our mind itself, our reason and our sense of law, or from what else? (4,4,1–2, trans. Farquharson) [T14]

As Malcolm Schofield has pointed out ((1999) 68 n. 13) the discursive structure here is 'more characteristic of Chrysippus than of himself [i.e. of Marcus]', meaning that this chapter comes closer to a more cogent way of arguing than to the parainetic style which characterizes the *Meditations*. Actually the passage starts with a well articulated $A \rightarrow B, B \rightarrow C$ etc. structure, but ends with two rhetoric questions, which possess a strong hortative value.

Marcus firmly connects demonstrative strategies to self-exhortation using a structure like this.

He also seems to envisage this aim using another form of argument which Marcus seems to recognize as a technical tool of Stoic logic: the disjunction, or *diezeugmenon*. In fact, in 4,3,5 Marcus writes:

Shall what is assigned from Universal Nature be repugnant to you? Revive the alternative (*to diezeugmenon*): ‘either Providence or atoms’, and the many proofs that the Universe is a kind of Commonwealth. (trans. Farquharson modified) [T15]

This text clearly shows the connection between demonstration on the one hand and self-exhortation and self-persuasion on the other. In order to accept what the Universal Nature has given to each man, one has *to recall the proofs* that the Universe is like a city, in which the actions of every citizen have to be directed towards the social well-being of the whole. The disjunction ‘either Providence or atoms’ also contributes to this awareness. It is a reference to a group of chapters spread throughout the *Meditations* (4,27; 6,10; 6,24; 7,32; 8,25,4; 9,31,1; 11,18,2; 12,14; 12,24,1), in which Marcus presents and discusses two alternatives: either the universe is well-ordered and each event is a consequence of such a rational structure or it is made of atoms, meaning that it is governed by chaos (in fact, ‘atoms’ has to be interpreted as an allusion to Epicurean physics). Scholars do not agree whether Marcus considers the ‘atoms’ alternative as a plausible one – see e.g. Annas (2004); Cooper (2004); and Giavatto (2008) 213–28 – but the indubitable aim of that disjunction is to claim that *in any case*, i.e. even if the universe is governed by chaos, men (i.e. Marcus himself) should not quit fulfilling their social duty, as explicitly affirmed in 10,6,1:

Whether there are Atoms or Nature, the first postulate must be: ‘I am part of the Whole which is governed by Nature’, the second: ‘I am allied in some way to the parts that are of the same kind with me.’ (trans. Farquharson) [T16]

This surprising reformulation of the disjunction (‘*both* in case that A *and* in case that B, I endorse a thesis based on B’) shows that the disjunction aims at reinforcing Marcus’ conviction on his endorsement of a social attitude based on the theory of a well-organized whole. In more general terms, one may say that disjunctions in the *Meditations* aim at persuading Marcus that his (Stoic-based) idea on a subject *x* is consistent with all possible states of affairs. This ‘exhaustive’ nature of disjunction-based demonstrations seems clear even when the subject is not the world structure, but, for instance, the rejection of any fear of death:

He who fears death fears either total loss of consciousness or a change of consciousness. Now if you should no longer possess consciousness, you will no longer be aware of any evil; alternatively, if you possess an altered consciousness, you will be an altered creature and will not cease from living. (8,58, trans. Farquharson) [T16]

We will end this paragraph with a further example of syllogistic reasoning in the *Meditations*:

Regret is blame of oneself for having let something useful go by; but the good must be something useful and worth the attention of a really good man. Now no really good man would regret having let a pleasure go by: no pleasure, therefore (*ara*), is either useful or good. (8,10, trans. Farquharson) [T17] (see also 10,25)

This chapter certainly does not possess a particular argumentative complexity, but it helps to understand how swift Marcus is when it comes to using all his dialectical competences to reach the philosophical goal of self-persuasion and moral improvement.

6. Conclusions

Our search for logic in Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* has led us to the following results:

- (1) Marcus does not deny the role and the importance of logic within the entire philosophical curriculum and *ipso facto* recognizes its contribution to shaping the path of the *prokopton* ('someone who makes progress') and the knowledge of the sage himself;
- (2) Marcus criticizes the 'abuse' of logic, i.e. the study of logic cut off from that kind of moral self-improvement; this criticism of self-referentiality, *nota bene*, concerns not only logic (although discussions about the technical parts of dialectic had to be at that time ideal candidates for such a self-referential attitude to the study of philosophy), but any kind of philosophical theme (physics, and even ethics: see [T1–3]) and attitudes;
- (3) Marcus integrates dialectical tools, principally elementary forms of syllogisms, in his philosophical style, oriented to self-persuasion and self-exhortation;
- (4) (strictly connected with 3) Marcus endorses dialectical theory in the theoretical background of his philosophical endeavor, namely to communicate with himself and intervene in his knowledge and his behavior.

If one looks at logic as a part of philosophy and, under a genuine ethico-practical perspective, as an active tool for moral progression, one may say that Marcus endorsed this conception of logic and modestly and genuinely made use of the dialectic competences at his disposal to integrate this part of philosophy in his intellectual agenda.

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CHAPTER 27

Ethics

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Marcus' ethics is Stoic ethics. There is no doubt about that, though it has been challenged more than once, as acknowledged by Rist (1982). As Marcus himself makes clear, a good life can only be achieved with the help of the Stoic doctrines:

Where is the good life to be found? In doing what man's nature requires. How then will he do this? If he keeps doctrines upon which impulses and actions depend. What are these doctrines? They concern good and evil, how nothing is good for man which does not make him just, sober, brave and free; how nothing is bad which does not produce the effects opposite of these just mentioned. (VIII. 1. 5)

There is no doubt either that Marcus' *Meditations* focus on ethics, as was regularly acknowledged from antiquity onwards, since Arethas, the first ancient author who mentions the *Meditations* in 907, calls the book the 'ethical writings addressed to himself', *ta eis eauton ethica* (*Scholia in Lucianum* 207, ed. Rabe). There is logic and there is physics in Marcus' *Meditations*, but ethics is the core of the work. And there may be non-Stoic ethical elements, but Stoic ethics is the core of Marcus' ethics.

The question is which Stoic ethics, and to what extent. A few decades before Marcus wrote for himself his ethical meditations, Epictetus had developed a renewed Stoicism, and Marcus had a copy of his *Discourses* recorded by Arrian, which deeply influenced him (see I. 7. 8). Epictetus was a rather orthodox Stoic, but he had his personal way of presenting the doctrine: he takes the division between things which are up to us and things which are not up to us as the starting-point (see *Handbook* 1), instead of the traditional Stoic

starting-point, namely *oikeiôsis*, ‘appropriation’, thus giving the impression that he rules out life, health, and wealth as objects of choice preferable to death, sickness, and poverty. However, in I. 2. 15, he seems to admit that life is preferable to death and in II. 16. 9–10, he seems to admit the doctrine of the selection of things in agreement with nature (see II. 10. 6 and Long (2002) 184). Similarly, Epictetus values above all deliberate choice (*prohairesis*). Marcus, on these issues, takes the middle path. He mentions *oikeiôsis* but not as a starting-point (III. 9. 2) and *prohairesis* is a rather minor issue for him,¹ but he seems to care for the preferred indifferents even less than Epictetus.

1. The End of Ethics

According to the standard accounts of Stoic ethics, the ultimate end or goal of human beings is to live in agreement with nature (*homologoumenôs têi phusei*) or according to nature (*kata phusin*), namely to live following nature (*akolouthôs têi phusei*), implying both individual nature and cosmic nature.² Marcus acknowledges that he has acquired the ‘notion of a life according to nature’ from his Stoic master Sextus (I. 9. 3). He mentions those who ‘live in agreement with nature’ (III. 4. 8) and ‘those who want to follow nature’ (IX. 1. 9), as models for himself. And he clearly recommends himself to ‘use the remaining time to live according to nature (*kata ten phusin*)’ (VII. 56). As in ancient Stoicism, this rule to follow nature identifies individual nature and cosmic nature: ‘walk straight, following (*akoulouthôn*) your proper nature and common nature, for the path of both is one’ (V. 3. 2). And, as in traditional Stoicism, he identifies life according to nature with life according to reason, since man’s nature is rational (VII. 11). In short, philosophy only wants what nature wants (V. 9. 3).

However, Marcus makes his own original contribution. First, he insists on the common welfare as an important aspect of the end. He says that ‘the end of rational animals is to follow (*epesthai*) the reason and the law (*thesmos*) of the most venerable city and constitution’ (II. 16. 6) – this is ‘the goal of life (*to telos tou biou*)’ for the good man (III. 16. 4). To be true, ‘the most venerable city and constitution’ is presumably the universe, considered in Stoicism as the city of god and human beings: to live following nature is to live according to the prescriptions of the ‘common law’ of Zeus as the ruler of this universal city (Diogenes Laertius VII. 88). However, there is more, since Marcus recommends to ‘relate your action to no other end than the social end (*koinonikon telos*)’ (XII. 20), so that social community appears as the end of all our *actions*. However, it seems that an equivalent statement could be found in ancient Stoicism, since, reporting Stoic doctrine, Cicero (*On ends* III. 65) writes that ‘we are born for a natural community’. Whereas

Cicero argues from an inborn tendency, Marcus argues in favor of an exclusive ultimate end.

Second, he articulates individual nature and universal nature in a way that seems to be all his own, since he considers individual (rational) nature as the nature according to which one has to act, while universal nature is the nature from which we must accept patiently our destiny: 'to act as your own nature leads you, to suffer what common nature brings' (XII. 32. 3). 'Keep looking at the goal Nature is leading you to, universal nature through what happens to you, your own nature through what you have to do' (VII. 55. 1). Nature as the ultimate end of human life is articulated in two different ways depending on whether it is universal nature or human individual nature. Such distinctions between *accepting* what is allotted by *universal nature* and *acting* in conformity with *human nature* are repeated several times (see Hadot (1998) 128–31). They are not in disagreement with the doctrine of the older Stoics, since their wise man 'welcomes what happens' and has a life 'in accordance with the experience of what happens by nature',³ but Marcus seems to give an original imprint to the notion of the end in agreement with nature.

2. The Starting-Point and Foundation of Ethics

Given the kind of work the *Meditations* are, one does not expect Marcus to build an argumentation in order to *demonstrate* the principles of Stoic ethics. However, one can wonder whether or not he is willing to accept the traditional starting-point or foundations of Stoic ethics. Nature turns out to be not only the end of ethics, but also its foundation and starting-point.

In standard accounts of Stoicism, the 'starting-point' of ethics is *oikeiôsis*, namely the perception an animal has of its own constitution and its impulse to preserve itself (Hierocles, *Elements of Ethics* I. 1–5; see Diogenes Laertius VII. 85; Cicero, *On Ends* III. 16). Alternatively, Stoics like Chrysippus take the 'starting-point and reference' of the ethical doctrines from the justice of Zeus, 'common nature', 'the administration of the world', and 'physical theory' in general.⁴ Properly speaking, it is *oikeiôsis* which is the starting-point of ethics, while physics, god, and common law are the points of reference and the foundations of ethics.

Marcus mentions *oikeiôsis* only once, and he does so in a bewildering way, since he mentions 'appropriation to other men' as one of the promises fulfilled by a pious respect of his own faculty of judgment as following nature (III. 9). In that case, 'appropriation' is not a starting-point but a consequence. However, as in the argument from appropriation, Marcus argues from self-love: in the morning meditation of V. 1, he argues that, similarly to the way plants and animals do what is proper to them, he should not act for the sake of pleasure but

should do what he has been equipped for, namely the task of a human being, since self-love should lead him to love his own nature and its will. Similarly, in VIII. 12, he argues that to do social acts is to act according ‘to your own constitution and to human nature’. And in VI. 44. 5–6, he argues that ‘what is advantageous to everyone is what is in conformity with one’s own constitution and nature’ and, from the fact that he is a Roman and a man, that all that benefits Rome and the universe is his only good. The argument is an elliptic deduction, inferring from the rational and political constitution of man that man’s only good is what is good for the city, insofar as man’s constitution is to be part of these two cities. Therefore, it is clear that one’s constitution and self-love may be considered as the starting-points of ethics, as in the traditional argument from appropriation.

Moreover, the situation of man in the universe as a rational part of it constitutes the physical foundations of ethics: ‘thanks to their reason, separate reasonable beings are constituted in order to cooperate as the members of the bodies in unified organisms’ (VII. 13. 1). Reason is what is common to all human beings, and ‘all that partakes in something common hasten towards what is of the same kind’ (IX. 9. 1). Human beings are parts of the universe as the whole (II. 4, IV. 14, VIII. 7. 2, IX. 22) and in this organic whole, rational beings are made for the sake of each other and must care for each other (IV. 3. 4, III. 4. 7, IX. 1. 1). From the fact that all human beings partake in reason, it follows that they may cooperate, but also that they have a natural tendency to do so and that they have to act for the sake of the whole in order to conform themselves to their nature. Organic comparisons make clear that it is the nature of human beings to be the parts of a whole and that one must act accordingly: a man who separates himself from other men is like a dismembered hand, foot, or head (VIII. 34), a branch cut off from the other branches (XI. 8).

To sum up, the foundation of Marcus’ ethics is the idea that he is a reasonable living being, who shares reason with other men, and that he is a part of the universe; as such, he must interact with others for the sake of the whole. It has sometimes been questioned whether Marcus admits Stoic physics as a basis for his ethics the way Chrysippus did, since at times he seems to argue that, whichever of the Epicurean or the Stoic systems of physics is true, the ethical attitude you should adopt is the same, namely the Stoic rationalistic attitude – this is what is encapsulated by the repeated alternative ‘providence or atoms’, as for instance in IX. 28. 2–3:

somehow fate or atoms – either the universe is a God, and all is well, either it is ruled by Chance, and in that case, be not yourself ruled by Chance.

In other words, one should adopt Stoic ethics, even if the physical world does not correspond to the Stoic vision of the universe (see Annas (2004) 118). In

that case, the providential vision of the universe which traditionally grounds Stoic ethics would be disregarded by Marcus as a valuable foundation for ethics, and Marcus' ethics would be independent of any commitment to a providential vision of the universe. This, in fact, is very unlikely, since his ethics are precisely grounded on a vision of himself as a part of an organic whole. In fact, as is the case with a similar argument used by Seneca (*Letters to Lucilius* 16. 4–6) Marcus' argument has probably some protreptical value within a context of self-exhortation: Marcus has made his choice between the two systems of physics but he underlines that even if Epicurean physics were true, Stoic ethics would still be acceptable.⁵

3. Indifferents

One of the consequences of the life according to nature is the *kathekon* or 'proper function' one has to perform: proper function is 'an activity appropriate to constitutions that accord with nature' (Diogenes Laertius VII. 107). Though proper function extends to animals and plants, in the case of rational animals, reason dictates the actions involved (VII. 108). It is based on the choice, among indifferent things, of the ones that have value since what is valuable is what is 'in accordance with nature'. Among things that are valuable, the most valuable is the good, but second to it is what is preferable: life, health, and wealth are not good, but they are preferable to death, sickness, and poverty, and they must be chosen preferably, except in certain circumstances.

Did Marcus take the preferred indifferents into account? One of the reasons to suspect that he might not is that, in a letter to Fronto (IV. 13, p. 68 van den Hout), he acknowledges to have been influenced by the reading of Aristo, a Stoic who was known for his rejection of the preferred indifferents and considered indifference as the end of life.⁶ Some formulas in Marcus seem to have an Aristonian hue: in XI. 16. 1, he recommends himself to be 'indifferent to indifferent things' and this seems to echo Aristo's definition of the end of life. And in VI. 32, he says in a more Epictetean way that everything is indifferent to the mind, except its own activities.

However, neither of those assertions is incompatible with orthodox Stoicism, and there are 'proper functions' in Marcus, in a way which seems to imply a choice between indifferents (see Hadot (1998) 71–72). And the following assertion is typically Stoic:⁷ 'nothing is good or evil which can happen indifferently to the evil man and to the good' (IV. 39).

Actions must be performed 'according to value' (XI. 37), and this implies that some things have more value than others, and that it is a rule for action to choose between things of unequal value. Such a choice implies the doctrines of the preferred indifferents. However, among the five occurrences of *kathekon*,

there is one in which Marcus connects the evaluation of a ‘proper function’ with the choice of an indifferent, namely the right moment to die (III. 1. 2). It is significant that he connects this choice not with the choice of a preferable thing (life) but with the choice of its contrary, which becomes preferable in certain circumstances. This is similar to what Epictetus does in II. 6. 9–10. In that passage, Epictetus quotes Chrysippus: ‘if I actually knew that I was fated to be ill, I would have an impulse to be ill’. In a similar passage, Marcus goes as far as to consider death as good in certain cases:

for each individual, the cessation of his life is no evil, for it is no dishonour to him, being not an object of rejection (*aproaireton*) nor without relation to the common good: it is rather a good, if it is in due season for the Whole, benefiting to it and benefited by it. (XII. 23. 5)

Therefore, Marcus is clearly not an Aristonian, since he goes as far as to consider death as a good when it benefits the universe – this seems to imply that in other circumstances, life must be a good if it benefits the universe. However, this is strikingly more radical than standard Stoicism. In a different manner, in other passages, he remarks that not to treat with an equal mind pain and pleasure, death and life, honor and dishonor is to be impious (IX. 1. 9), or he recommends himself to be ‘above reputation and death and all similar things’ (X. 8. 2). In such passages, he seems to really adopt indifference without preference towards indifferent things.

It is clear that the reading of Aristo is only one step in the story of Marcus’ conversion to philosophy, and that the reading of Epictetus was much more influential, even in the case of his valuation of the indifferents (Hadot (1998) 14). Marcus does not have an Aristonian attitude towards indifferents: he recognizes a difference of value between indifferent things, and this value is dictated by the perspective of the whole. This implies that one must be above indifferent things, and be ready to consider dispreferred indifferents as goods if they are for the benefit of the whole. Chrysippus’ quotation by Epictetus shows that this attitude may be unorthodox in expression, but in line with the spirit of ancient Stoicism.

4. Proper Functions (Right Actions)

Marcus does not give a list of the proper functions, and only uses the word five times. But there is no doubt that action is an important issue for him. According to I. 12, proper functions are ‘connected to our relationships with those who live with us’. Relations with those who live with us are one of the three relationships we have: with our environment, with the divine cause

of the universe, with ‘those who live with us’ (VIII. 27). This is almost literally a quotation from Epictetus, who says that ‘our proper functions are in general measured by our relationships’ (*Handbook* 30). In this chapter, Epictetus clearly alludes to the doctrine of appropriation: ‘you are not *appropriated* to a good father, but to a father’. He means that we have a natural relationship to our father as such, and that it is this relationship which determines our duties to him, regardless of whether he is a good or a bad father: ‘he is your father – it is prescribed to you to take care of him, to yield to him in all things, to bear it when he abuses or beats you’. Proper functions are dictated by the relationship we have with such and such a person, not by the inner moral quality of that person. From that point of view, proper functions do not need to be referred to the preferred indifferents, they are based on the natural relationship we have with someone. In actual fact, Marcus does not restrict proper functions to our duties to our fellow men, since, for instance, as mentioned above, he connects the evaluation of a ‘proper function’ with the choice of the right moment to die (III. 1. 2). However, it is true that, when he determines what we have to do, in most cases, it is in connection with our relationships to other human beings.

From that perspective, he repeatedly says that actions must be performed in the service of mankind (IV. 33. 3, VIII. 7, VIII. 23, IX. 6, IX. 31, XI. 37, XII. 20). As already mentioned, this is related to the fact that the goal in the direction of which actions are accomplished is one’s individual nature as human nature (VII. 55. 1). This indicates a clear rule in a much debated question of Stoicism, namely the conflict between individual and general interest or between utility and honesty: in such cases, Antipater is reported to have argued from the fact that one has to be ‘in the service of human society’ that there is no difference between individual and general interest (Cicero, *On Ends* III. 52–53). Similarly, Marcus takes the deliberate stance of considering the interest of the community as his only real good (VI. 44. 6).

Marcus adds further rules for action: first, every action must be done with a purpose and seriousness, and nothing must be done at random (II. 16. 6, XII. 24. 1; see Hadot (1998) 185–88); second, everything must be done with reservation, namely with the sense that our actions may fail (XI. 37; see Hadot (1998) 204–209). This is an important rule for Marcus, since it avoids frustrations due to failure. If one has in mind that one may fail, one will not be disappointed by the shortcomings of one’s actions.

5. Desires and Emotions

In standard Stoicism, emotion or passion is an excessive impulse, caused by a wrong judgment, or is a wrong judgment (Stobaeus II. 7, p. 88, 8–90, 6; Diogenes Laertius VII. 110–11). As a consequence, the Stoic wise man must

be free from passion and he must only have good emotions, namely reasonable emotions (Diogenes Laertius VII. 116–17). The Stoics count four basic passions: pleasure, fear, desire, and distress; and three corresponding good emotions: joy, watchfulness, and will, distress having no reasonable equivalent. The Stoic conception of emotion is usually opposed to the Platonic views on passions, according to which an emotion is caused by an irrational part of the soul. Marcus is in agreement with the Stoic conception of passion. ‘To be completely free of emotions’ is one of the things he learned from his Stoic teacher Sextus (I. 9. 9), and he mentions *apatheia*, the absence of emotion in other occasions (VI. 16. 8, XI. 18. 22), and he frequently rejects passions, either in general (I. 9. 9, II. 13. 2, III. 4. 4, VII. 66. 3, VIII. 48. 3, XII. 19. 1), or under the form of generic passions like fear (II. 12. 3, V. 6. 8, VII. 16, VIII. 58. 1, IX. 40. 2, XI. 20. 5, XII. 19. 2), or under the form of some subordinate passions, like anger (I. 9. 9, X. 30. 2, XI. 20. 5), or sexual passions, which he claims to have delivered himself from (I. 17. 13).

It is clear to him that emotions are judgments: ‘things do not touch the soul, but stand outside unmoved, and disturbances come only from the opinion within’ (IV. 3. 10); ‘if you suffer pain because of something external, what troubles you is not the thing itself, but your judgment about it’ (VIII. 47. 1). These formulas echo Epictetus’ words in *Handbook* 5a: ‘what troubles human beings is not things, but their judgment about things’. As an example, Epictetus gives death: death does not trouble us, but our judgment about death causes fear (see *Handbook* 16). Pain and fear are emotions resulting from a wrong judgment and the wrong opinion must be eradicated. Similarly, in III. 8. 1–5, Epictetus contrasts the impression that one’s son is dead or that one has been imprisoned with the impression: ‘something bad has happened to him’. Along the same line, Marcus makes a contrast between the ‘first impressions’, for instance that ‘someone has spoken badly about you’, ‘the little child is ill’, and what may be added to these first impressions: ‘he has wronged you’, ‘he is in danger’ (VIII. 49; see IV. 7). In the case of the illness of the child, there is not, properly speaking, a value judgment, so that the claim Marcus makes is more general than the one made by Epictetus. The impression ‘declares’ something, as Marcus says, and we wrongly add something to this declaration – it may be a value judgment, but it may also be a speculative proposition. In the first case, a passion may occur if one gives assent to the ‘added’ judgment, and, in all cases, one has to stick to the first impression, which is the only one to describe reality adequately. To habituate oneself not to add anything to the first judgment is one of Marcus’ favorite exercises (see Hadot (1998) 101–105). It is, among other things, the way to free oneself from emotions caused by a wrong opinion. More generally, Marcus recommends himself to restrain desire and aversion to what is up to us (VIII. 7. 1), adapting a passage from Epictetus which he quotes literally elsewhere: ‘abstain from desire and employ aversion in

regard to nothing that is not in your own control' (XI. 37). Precisely speaking, according to Epictetus, emotion occurs as a result of the failure of a desire (III. 2. 3). Marcus' rule, namely to restrict desires to what is up to us, is directly borrowed from Epictetus, and it is his most radical device to eradicate emotion. Literally it means that we must desire only to improve our own selves, by transforming our desires into the renunciation of our desires. One may find a very typical illustration of this practice in IX. 40. 6–9:

that man prays: 'how may I be involved with that woman'; you: 'how may I not desire to be involved with her'; another one: 'how may I get rid of this man'; you: 'how may I not want to get rid of him'; another: 'how may I not lose my little child'; you: 'how may I not be afraid of losing him'.

In those cases, sexual desire, envy, fear, namely passions are changed into the desire of not having these emotions. Instead of having the desire of a woman, he recommends himself to have the desire of not having an affair with her. In such cases, there is no other desire than the desire of not having any emotion. This means that the desire really bears on the only things that are up to us: the faculties of our soul.

But this transformation of desire may have some less restrictive application and Marcus seems to admit that we may desire things which can be obtained, as opposed to inaccessible things: abbreviating Epictetus, he says that for instance we must not search for figs in winter, no more than we should search for a son when he is withdrawn from us (XI. 33). Of course, this is a paraphrase of Epictetus, and not Marcus' own words, but he seems to accept Epictetus' exhortation. Compared to what he says in IX. 40. 6–9, here, he seems to mean that, among external objects, we may desire what nature can give us. We must not desire to have a son when he is taken from us by death, but we may reasonably desire to have a son if nature does give us one. As a matter of fact, when something is given to us by nature, we may reasonably enjoy that gift.

Purification of desire makes room for the corresponding good emotion: we must accept with joy and piety what nature gives us (VII. 54, IX. 6) – when he recommends himself to restrain desire and aversion to what is up to us, he immediately adds: 'and welcoming all that is assigned by universal nature' (VIII. 7. 1). The two rules seem complementary: we must restrict our desires to what depends on us and rejoice in whatever is given to us by nature.

6. Virtues

On virtues, Marcus has traditional Stoic views: nothing is good or evil which can happen indifferently to the evil man and to the good man (IV. 39). To this

he adds Epictetus' view that only things which are up to us are good or bad (VI. 41). Virtues can happen to the wise man alone since they depend on us and can be attained and performed only by the wise man. Therefore virtues are the only real goods: Marcus lists the four traditional Stoic virtues, wisdom, temperance, justice, and courage, as such kinds of real goods (V. 12. 2).

However, on some other occasions, Marcus seems to replace the traditional quadripartite list of four virtues by a more original list of three virtues, truth, temperance, and justice (IX. 1, XII. 15). As acknowledged by Hadot ((1998) 234), 'the substitution of the notion of "truth" for that of "prudence" should not surprise us, for Plato had already once (*Republic* 487a5) given the four virtues the names of "truth", "justice", "courage", and "temperance"'. This is not surprising even inside the Stoic school, since certain Stoics have a tendency to connect wisdom (*phronesis*) with the search for truth (Cicero, *On Duties* I. 15–16). However, this system of three virtues, as Hadot ((1998) 234–35) shows by a careful analysis of IX. 1, seems to correspond to the three disciplines which Marcus borrows from Epictetus – justice corresponds to the discipline of action, temperance to the discipline of desire, and truth to the discipline of assent.

7. Politics

Given Marcus' position as emperor, it is not surprising that he repeatedly insists on politics. But Marcus never gives a very articulated political agenda to himself.

It is a Stoic tenet that the world is

like a city, consisting of gods and men, with the gods serving as rulers and men as their subjects. They are members of a community because of their participation in reason. (Eusebius, *Evangelical preparation* XV. 15. 4)

This implies that each human being belongs to two cities, this worldwide city as a community of men and god, and the human city 'to which we have been assigned by the accident of our birth' (Seneca, *On Leisure* 4. 1). The universal city is ruled by the common law which is the law of Zeus and his reason, while the individual cities are ruled by their own particular laws and customs.

Marcus recognizes the two cities – in his case Rome and the universe – and argues from his individual nature as rational nature (VI. 44. 6–7). He also admits that there is a world-intellect which is 'social' and takes care of the common good: he has organized the universe hierarchically, constituting some beings for the sake of others (Marcus alludes to the Stoic tenet that irrational animals have been made for the sake of men), and has distributed things 'according to value' (V. 30). As aptly noted by Hadot ((1998) 211), the

intellect of the all ‘appears like a good king’ (or at least a good ruler) who ‘institutes community, harmony and concord among rational beings, and distributes goods with justice’. It seems rather clear then that Marcus admits that human beings belong to a community constituted by them and universal reason or intellect, in which men are citizens and the common reason the ruler. It is true that, in Marcus’ *Meditations*, the articulation between common reason and individual minds is ambiguous: ‘common reason’ or ‘common intellect’ just seems to be the rationality shared by all men, but in a chapter like V. 30 it rather seems that the ‘common intellect’ is the ruler of other rational beings which he has created: this is confirmed by the close passage of V. 27 where Marcus says that Zeus has also given a portion of himself to each man. To sum up, all men seem to share in the same common reason as the common law, and common reason has given to each man a portion of itself. Therefore it is very unlikely, despite what Marcus *seems* to mean in certain passages, that he considers in an unorthodox way the common city not as common to men and god, but to men alone. As noted by Schofield ((1991) 68 n. 13), this is what he seems to mean in IV. 4. 1–2:

If mind is common to us, reason too, in virtue of which we are rational, is common; if so, reason which enjoins what is to be done or not is common; if so, law is common; if so, we are citizens; if so, we participate in some kind of political organisation; if so, the world is like a city; for what other political organisation will anyone say that the whole human race partakes in?

Here, it seems to be the case that only men, because of their common mind and reason, partake in a unique political organization. However, if compared with V. 27 and V. 30, it seems clear that what the text means is that men partake in a political organization common to all rational beings including Zeus as the reason of the universe, who is the ruler of this community, which he has created, giving to each human being a part of his reason.

The consequence of the fact that man belongs to these two cities is that the only good is what is advantageous to these two cities (VI. 44. 6). Strictly speaking, this does not seem to be a principle of government for Marcus as a ruler because the only good he mentions is the ‘only good for himself’, but he describes himself as an Antonine, so that it cannot be really far from his mind that in Rome he is not a plain citizen but an emperor. What is good for him as a ruler is not different from what is good for him as a citizen – and after all, he acknowledges explicitly in another passage that he is a Roman *and* a ruler (III. 5. 2). If so, it means that what is good for him, namely what is good for the emperor of Rome, is what is useful to two cities, Rome and the universe. Does it mean that a good can only be what is useful to both Rome and the universe, and that, for instance, if something is useful for Rome and not for the universe, it is

not a good? In a way, yes, but it must also mean that there cannot be something which is really advantageous to Rome if it is not advantageous to the world. If it is true that a man cannot cut himself from human fellowship, no more than a branch can cut itself from a tree without damage to the branch (XI. 8) and that every human action must be done for the good of human fellowship (XII. 20) and that what is good for Marcus is what is advantageous both for Rome and the universe, it means that it must be a principle for him as a ruler to have in mind not only what is advantageous for Rome but what is advantageous for the universe. Unselfishness must be raised from the status of a principle of self-government to the rank of a principle of government. In addition, one should note that, in this context, Marcus takes 'advantageous' and 'good' in the sense of the preferred indifferents: 'advantages must be referred to in a more common sense to the intermediate realities' (VI. 45). This clearly means that Marcus' political rule to choose what is advantageous and good does not refer to virtues as the only good, but to what is in conformity with nature: what is good for human fellowship is what is preferable, namely, wealth, health, life, peace, and this is what a ruler must have in mind.

It is obviously in this sense that one should interpret Marcus' famous statement in IX. 29. 5: 'do not hope for Plato's *Republic*'. For Marcus himself comments on this by saying: 'who will change their convictions? But without a change of their convictions, what is there except the slavery of people who moan and pretend to obey?' (IX. 29. 6). This seems to refer to the men in the cave of the *Republic*, before they are guided out and see the light of the Sun. Without a conversion of the soul to the light of the Good – without being educated in sciences, philosophy and wisdom – men remain as slaves in a cave cut off from real light. This is what Marcus seems to allude to by mentioning 'the change of convictions' of men (see Farquharson (1944) 810–11), but he seems to consider, in contrast with Plato, that it is impossible to change men's minds and therefore, that they always remain like slaves in the cave. It is impossible to change every man into a philosopher. To be exact, of course, Plato only recommends this higher education for rulers, and expects that there will be a change in cities only when there will be a philosopher-king. Obviously, Marcus is a philosopher and the ruler of Rome, so that he seems to realize Plato's program. So why does he say: 'do not hope for the *Republic* of Plato'?

As Hadot ((1998) 303) notes, 'Plato's *Republic*' was a proverbial expression, which 'did not, properly speaking, designate the political program set forth' in Plato's dialogue, but 'more generally, it referred to a state in which all citizens would have become philosophers'. In this case, what Marcus has in mind is the utopia of a city constituted only of virtuous human beings, a traditional interpretation of certain assessments of Zeno's *Republic*: according to this interpretation, only the sages are citizens (see Diogenes Laertius VII. 33).

Whether or not this interpretation of Zeno's *Republic* and of his political philosophy may be true,⁸ it is clearly not endorsed by Marcus, who does not believe in a city of wise men – 'for who will change their convictions?', namely who will change human beings into wise men?

As a consequence what Marcus has a ruler must provide for his fellow-citizens, who, in point of fact, are all slaves, is the preferred indifferents. And he must be satisfied if he can provide them with those 'goods' in the common sense and with a 'very little step forward': 'reflect that this tiny little thing is not a little thing at all' (IX. 29. 5).⁹

In fact, there seems to be a discrepancy between Marcus' repeated statement that men are fellow-citizens of their own city and of the cosmic city and his statement that, since they are not philosophers or sages, they are slaves. This is an inherent tension in Stoicism, since Stoics repeat that ordinary men are slaves, and this is the basis of the tenet that only wise men are real citizens. This conflict seems to find some kind of practical resolution in Marcus' conception of government, since he considers that the equality between men must be realized by the equality of law: he maintains to have 'the conception of a state in which the laws are equal for all, administered according to equality and freedom of speech, and of a monarchy which respects the freedom of all its subjects above all' (I. 14. 2). Roman citizens are subjects – but they are all subjected to the same laws and to the same rights and they have equality of speech. From that point of view, they really share the same law, so that the commonwealth of citizens in Rome is achieved by a provident ruler, as the universal community of the rational beings is achieved by the intellect of the universe.

Despite this probable analogy, Marcus does not envision himself as a semi-god, but he has principles of conduct as a ruler based on modesty and virtue: 'do not Cesarize' (VI. 30. 1), namely do not act like a tragedian taking an heroic pose on the world-stage, like Alexander or Philip (IX. 29. 7), but 'keep yourself simple, good, pure, grave, a friend of justice, pious, benevolent, affectionate, firm in accomplishing your proper task' (VI. 30. 2). He takes Antoninus as a model (VI. 30. 5). He prescribes to himself to refer every action to the common good without partisan mind (IX. 23), namely to do everything for the benefit of mankind and take decisions accordingly, and not because it seems popular (IV. 12), and not to look for the praise of men (III. 6. 4, VI. 16. 3) or for a reputation (VIII. 1. 1).

8. Ethical Exercises and Moral Improvement

'Exercise' (*askêsis*) defines philosophy in ancient Stoicism. According to Pseudo-Plutarch (*Opinions* I, 874 E) 'wisdom is the science of divine and human affairs', while philosophy is 'the exercise of the appropriate art', namely

the exercise appropriate to the acquisition of virtue. So philosophy is explicitly defined by the ancient Stoics not as an intellectual research or activity, but as an exercise whose aim is virtue. By choosing the word *askêsis*, and not *zêtêsis* ('research'), the Stoics clearly meant that philosophy is not solely the pursuit of a theoretical knowledge, but a practice and an activity. Originally, *askêsis* applies primarily to physical exercise and to the diet of athletes. In his *On exercise*, the Stoic Musonius Rufus, the master of Epictetus, explains the necessity of exercise for the philosopher: virtue is not only theoretical knowledge, but it is a practical art, as medicine and music are. 'It is therefore necessary to exercise oneself to act according to theorems', so that one who wants to become a wise man must exercise himself (p. 22, 7–23, 3 Hense). Musonius adds that one must practice exercises of the body as well as exercises of the soul, and exercises common to both, like frugal food and rough sleep.

When he was young, Marcus practiced philosophical exercises common to body and soul, like sleeping on the ground (I. 6. 8). But soon, he read the lessons of Epictetus (I. 7. 8). It is obviously from him that he took on the practice of philosophical exercises. According to Epictetus, if one wants to become wise, one 'has to exercise (*askêthênai*) in three areas': desire and aversion, impulse and repulsion, assent (*Dissertations* III. 2. 1–2). This tripartite exercise corresponds, as may be seen in IV. 11. 6, to the three activities of the soul (as opposed to impression, which is a passive faculty). Epictetus repeats this threefold structure many times. Marcus himself, in XI. 37, quotes an otherwise lost passage of Epictetus describing these three exercises, and he seems to endorse them.¹⁰ It would be exaggerated to say that this tripartite exercise structures the whole of the *Meditations*, since, for instance, Marcus does not introduce the exercise of assent before III. 11. It may also be questioned whether the three areas correspond to the three traditional parts of Stoic philosophy, as Hadot claims, maintaining that the exercise on desire and aversion corresponds to physics, the exercise on impulse to ethics, and the exercise on assent to logic (Hadot (1998) 86–98). The third connection is easy to prove, because of the presence in this text and others similar to it, of the technical vocabulary of 'dialectical virtue'. The identification of the second area with ethics or at least with a part of ethics is uncontroversial. More difficult and controversial is the identification of the first area with physics. Hadot's explanation is that the discipline of desire relies on a recognition of our place in the universe and an acceptance of what nature imposes on us, both based on a 'physical' vision of events and things. In fact, this is in agreement with what Cicero (*On Ends* III. 73) writes about the necessity of physics as a virtue: according to him, for the Stoics, physics is a virtue that consists in the knowledge of nature *in order* to achieve agreement with nature. On the other hand, living in agreement with nature is certainly the end of ethics, so that it is not unquestionable to identify acceptance of nature as the virtue of physics.

Whatever may be the case, the practice of the three exercises and the mastering of the three corresponding areas are certainly central to Marcus' practice of ethics. However, the notion of ethical progress is not central in Marcus, contrary to what may be the case in Epictetus and in ancient Stoicism,¹¹ and Marcus seldom uses the word 'progress': he mentions it only once, to congratulate himself on not having made progress in rhetoric and poetics (I. 17. 8). However, Epictetus' conception of moral progress, as may be seen from *Dissertations*, I. 4 'On progress', is based on a progress in the three areas, especially the first two, since mastering logic is less urgent (I. 4. 11–12). Exercising oneself to control one's desires and impulses is obviously one of the conditions of moral progress for Marcus too. Elsewhere in the present book the reader will find more indications concerning Marcus' exercises and meditation techniques (see Chapter 20 and Chapter 29): maxims, formulation and meditation of doctrines, short lists of headings, logical formulation of arguments, self-dialogue, self-exhortation, self-prescriptions, exercises on impressions, morning meditation for the day to come. However, all these ethical exercises do not seem to be precisely devoted to self-progress. They are rather an 'escort through life', as Marcus says about philosophy (II. 17. 3–4). There is no real sense of his own moral progress in Marcus' *Meditations*. What we have, on the contrary, is rather the sense of a repeated effort to keep himself at a sufficient level of harmony and to do his best at every moment of his life, with the idea that life may already have come to its end – there is no more time for improvement, but now is the moment: 'as if you were dead and have not lived up to now, you must use the balance of what remains to live according to nature' (VII. 56). This may be the reason why the *Meditations* end with the striking image of Marcus leaving life reconciled with Nature and God: 'Leave therefore in peace, since he also who dismisses you is in peace' (XII. 36. 5).

NOTES

- * I wish to express my gratitude to Ada Bronowski for kindly checking and correcting my English.
- 1. XI. 36 (quoting Epictetus); *prohairesetikon* in VIII. 56. 1 and XII. 33. 2; *prohairesisthai* in III. 7. 2, IX. 2. 3 and XI. 15. 1.
- 2. See Diogenes Laertius VII. 87–88; Stobaeus, *Eclogae* II. 7. 6b, p. 75, 11–76, 15 Wachsmuth.
- 3. [Plutarch], *On Fate* 11, 574 D and Stobaeus, *Eclogae* II. 7. 6b, p. 76, 8. For welcoming what happens, see III. 16. 3.
- 4. Plutarch, *Stoic Contradictions* 9, 1035 C–D. Note that all the passages Plutarch extracts from Chrysippus come from books on physics. Compare with Cicero, *On Ends* III. 73, who describes physics as a virtue since 'one who is to live in accordance with nature must take his starting-point from the universe and its

administration'. Cicero's passage seems to be based on passages similar to the ones quoted by Plutarch, and gives confirmation that it is within the context of physics that common nature and the administration of the world are presented as starting-points for ethics.

5. See Hadot (1998) 149–50 and Cooper (2004) 346–57: Cooper argues, rather convincingly, that Marcus has no convincing reason to substantiate his claim.
6. See Sextus, *M.* XI. 64–67 and Cicero, *Acad.* II. 130; see Ioppolo (1980) 149–54, 162–64.
7. Note that the technical term 'preferred' (*proêgmena*) appears in Farquharson's edition ((1944) 56) for IV. 12, but it is Farquharson's emendation, without support in the manuscript tradition.
8. See Schofield (1991) and Vogt (2008). According to Vogt's thesis, only the sages and the gods have full citizenship in the cosmic city, while the others are just inhabitants of the city or second-rank citizens (see Vogt (2008) 65–110).
9. On Marcus' statement, 'do not hope for Plato's *Republic*', see Reydam-Schils (2005) 84–89. This book contains many useful analyses of Marcus' ethics.
10. See for instance IV. 33. 3, VII. 54, VIII. 7, IX. 7, XI. 37. See Hadot (1998) 43–47 and 82–100.
11. On progress in Epictetus and ancient Stoicism see Bonhöffer (1996) 186–99.

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CHAPTER 28

Social Ethics and Politics

*Gretchen Reydamns-Schils**

1. Social Embeddedness

Look to it that you are not turned into a Caesar, nor imbued with purple, for this happens. Thus, keep yourself simple, good, unadulterated, dignified, unpretentious, a friend to what is just, god-fearing, gentle, affectionate, and firm in carrying out appropriate tasks. Struggle to remain such as philosophy wanted to make you. Revere the gods, protect human beings. Life is short. There is but one fruit of earthly life: a holy disposition and acts on behalf of the common good. (6.30 part)

In the remainder of this passage Marcus Aurelius goes on to pay tribute to his adoptive father, the emperor Antoninus Pius. It must have cost Marcus Aurelius a considerable effort not to identify himself completely with the role of emperor. Stoicism, as in the theory of ‘roles’ advanced by Panaetius (Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.107–17; Gill (1988) 169–99) and the presence of the same motif in Epictetus (Frede (2007) 153–68), would have enjoined him to take his task and social role very seriously, with a deeply rooted sense of duty (cf. also 2.5, 3.5, 8.1). Given that even the social category of ‘friends of the emperor’ (*amici principis*) was governed by heavy-handed court protocol, a conversation with himself and the reflections as they have come down to us probably provided Marcus Aurelius with the only avenue for distancing himself from his imperial authority and taking off the purple cloak (cf. also 6.12, 8.9; Brunt (1974) 1–20; Rosen (1996) 154–60).

In his self-representation Marcus Aurelius deliberately adopts a low-authority profile, even though he does address the challenges of leadership, a point to which

we shall return (cf. also 11.18, 7.36). This approach he has in common with other Stoics of the imperial era, such as Seneca, Musonius Rufus, and Epictetus. For these Stoics, the only issue that ultimately matters is the interiorizing of philosophical tenets – of the true good as they define it – and the enactment in whichever conditions of life one finds oneself, be it as a freed slave or the ruler of an empire. Or as Musonius Rufus renders the point succinctly, ‘philosophy is *nothing else* than to search out by reason what is right and proper, and by deeds to put it into practice’ (14 end Lutz/Hense, cf. also 4, on philosophy as the art of becoming a good human being). For the sake of this empowerment of the individual agent, Seneca and Epictetus downplay the authority of the founders of Stoicism (Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus), and Musonius Rufus and Epictetus downplay their own authority as teachers (Bénatouil (2009) 127–55; Reydams-Schils (2011)).

The opening passage of this chapter already highlights the crucial social dimension of Marcus Aurelius’ reflections. Paradoxically, by withdrawing into a conversation with himself, he opens himself up all the more to his relations with others (Foucault (2001) 144–61). Reverence towards the gods is not merely juxtaposed here with his duties towards other human beings: as other notes make clear, the latter follow from the former. Human sociability is anchored in the Stoic notion of the divine, as the Reason that represents the common origin of all humans and hence makes us all akin.¹ Duties towards others mirror the divine providential care for the universe as a whole. Thus, the socio-political dimension encompasses relationships *both* with the god(s) and with other human beings (Vogt (2008)). For Marcus Aurelius, the community of rational beings is not limited to sages and gods, but includes all humans. This inclusion also entails that ‘benefiting’ is not restricted to the rapport among sages, but that, again, all human beings can, in principle, benefit one another (Cicero, *De Finibus* 3.69; Fuhrer and Howald (2000) 81–87).

Marcus Aurelius does not merely endorse the common Stoic view that other living beings exist for the sake of humans (and gods), to be used and ruled by them;² he emphasizes that human beings are meant *to serve one another*.³ ‘Thus the main principle in the constitution of a human being is concern for the common good’ (7.55). We are to protect others (6.30), and ‘acts on behalf of the common good’, together with a ‘holy disposition’ (6.30) constitute the ‘one fruit of earthly life’ (6.30). Nor is this perspective a matter of a mere rational calculation, of, for instance, the greatest good for the greatest number of people, as a later view such as utilitarianism would have it. No, ‘affection’ (*philostorgon*) is essential to the undertaking, a point often overlooked by the common understanding of Stoicism. Moreover, ‘love of mankind’ is channeled through relationships with specific people and groups, and does not bypass those.

The importance of sociability is a distinctive trait of Marcus Aurelius’ approach to ethics, and some of his most striking contributions are in this

area (Annas (2002) 109–23; Reydam-Schils (2005a) and (2012); van Ackeren (2011) II.3). The first book of his *Meditations* immediately leads us to the intricate web of his social relations, and it constitutes a very distinctive exercise of memory.

For the later Stoics in particular (Reydam-Schils (2007) 95–101) memory does not merely have an epistemological function, as a crucial step in concept formation; it has the broadest existential range conceivable, as memory of a lived life in its ethical significance (or lack thereof). In this existential range memory of people is not limited to one's friends, but includes the entire social fabric of relationships. Finally, memory does not dwell on pleasure (*voluptas-hêdonê*), as the Epicureans would have it, but is a vehicle for the good emotion (*eupatheia*) joy (*gaudium-chara*).

It is the social dimension of this kind of existential memory which the first book of Marcus Aurelius' notes illustrates so well. In a reversal of the testament motif Marcus Aurelius talks about what others bequeathed to him. In a second crucial transformation of that motif, it is not riches, or hereditary honors, that matter here, but the only thing that qualifies as good for a Stoic, namely virtue in all its manifestations. Marcus Aurelius was 'given' to emulate examples of nobility of character, evenness of temper, modesty, manliness, piety, generosity, innocence, and simplicity, to mention only the first three notes. Teachers of rhetoric, philosophy, and other subjects occur alongside relatives, from both his original and his adoptive family. This feature strongly underscores the point that the good life is not the exclusive domain of teachers of philosophy.

The last note is dedicated to the gods, and it serves as a recapitulation of the book. The essential connection between the bond among human beings and the divine is at work here too, in the sense that this note literally opens up the web of social relations to the gods. The proper role of the study of 'nature' and the providential care of the gods emerge clearly:

that often and clearly I entertained the notion of a life according to nature; that as a result, and to the extent this depends on the gods and communications from the other world, as well as aid and inspiration, there is nothing to prevent me from living already according to nature, though I fall short of this by my own fault and through neglect of the admonitions and, so to say, teachings from the gods.
(1.17 part)

The remaining notes are dedicated to the struggle of bridging the gap between reflecting on what it means to 'live according to nature' and actually living such a life.

2. Don't Hope for Plato's Republic

The social dimension of ethics as Marcus Aurelius presents it has to be realized in society as given, and not in some idealized alternative communities, such as

Plato's *kallipolis* from his *Republic*, the Epicurean Garden, or another philosophical circle. (This view is the primary reason why the later Stoics, even when they happen to be teachers such as Musonius Rufus and Epictetus, do not promote permanent or semi-permanent attachments to teachers and philosophical schools.) It does constitute an ideal in the sense of setting a very high normative standard, but one that has to be implemented in ordinary circumstances, with all the challenges those pose:

The cause of all things is a wild torrent. It carries everything along. How insignificant are these mannikins who engage in politics and act, so they would like to believe, the part of a philosopher. All drivellers! What then, human being? Do what nature demands of you this very moment. Take action, if the opportunity arises, and don't look around to check whether anybody will notice. Don't hope for Plato's Republic, but be content if you can take but the smallest step forward, and do not consider such an outcome negligible. For who can change people's conviction, and without a change of convictions what else do we get but subservience of those who sigh against it and who make a pretense of obeying. Come then, tell me about Alexander, Philipp, and Demetrius of Phalerum. I will follow if they realized what nature wanted, and taught themselves accordingly. But if they played a part in tragedy, nobody has condemned me to imitate them. The task of philosophy is simple and reverent; do not lead me astray towards grandiosity. (9.29)

Marcus Aurelius rejects two types of ideals here (Reydams-Schils (2005a) 86–89), the traditional concept of glory embodied by 'great' generals and rulers such as Alexander, as well as the more philosophical notion of a radical transformation of society. On the first issue, Marcus Aurelius, not surprisingly for a Stoic, rejects traditional glory altogether: it represents merely vain ostentation. All that matters is acting in accord with nature, even if that nature happens to be a torrent of change and flux (see also the preceding note, 9.28). (For the Stoics, who were influenced by Heraclitus in this respect, the order of nature is change, albeit a change that is not always 'comfortable' in the ordinary non-philosophical sense.)⁴

But the second issue is more revealing in this context. According to the *Historia Augusta* (*Marcus* 27.7), Marcus Aurelius was fond of quoting Plato's stance on the king-philosopher. His own *Meditations*, however, reveal a markedly critical attitude. 'Don't hope for Plato's Republic', he tells himself (9.29). So what can and should a ruler hope for, especially given that the traditional motivations to enter public life, namely, the desire for glory and the ambition to leave one's mark, won't do? Any ruler should have realistic expectations about the changes he can effect, Marcus Aurelius cautions.

Marcus Aurelius was not the first author to have used the phrase 'Plato's Republic' as short-hand for unrealistic and utopian expectations. In the tradition it became associated with Cato the Younger because he refused to make any concessions to *Realpolitik*.⁵ In his *De Oratore* (1.227ff.) Cicero also uses the phrase to portray defendants who refuse to lower themselves and play on the emotions of their judges (or forbid their counsel to behave in this manner on their behalf) so as to obtain a favorable verdict (Lévy (2000) 127–44). They refrain from such behavior, Cicero quibbles, 'for fear, no doubt, of being reported to the Stoics'. And he connects this attitude to Socrates' similar behavior at his trial. The Stoic Epictetus actually questions the behavior of a friend who tried to imitate Socrates at his own trial over a relatively minor issue, and thus lost his case. One always has to keep timing, circumstances, and what is proper to oneself (*ta idia*) in mind, Epictetus warns, and not engage in provocation for the sake of provocation (*Dissertationes* 2.2.17–20). Here Epictetus appears to be in line with Marcus Aurelius' sense of restraint. And Musonius Rufus, at any rate, allegedly claimed that unlike Socrates, he fully intended to defend himself at his trial (Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 4.46).

So the first problem with people who 'hope for Plato's Republic' is a certain intransigence, which in Cicero's account is attested for both the Stoics and Socrates. They refuse to make any concessions. But such an attitude would have been impossible for an emperor. Marcus Aurelius would have had to aim at an equilibrium between holding on to his philosophical principles and striving towards effective leadership. He cannot and will not simply walk away from people and situations that do not suit him: according to Marcus Aurelius, a wise person will be able to convert even obstacles into opportunities to promote the good.

Unwillingness to make any concessions or compromises can lead to further problems. Pierre Hadot ((1998) 303–306) suggests that the phrase 'Plato's Republic' indicates that one wants to surround oneself exclusively with philosophers, or at least with those who have inclinations towards philosophy. If one keeps company only with like-minded people (9.3), the potential for conflict disappears. But Marcus Aurelius knows that responsibility for community will involve working on behalf of many people who come nowhere close to the ideal and who do not even care. And so one of his regular exercises is to fortify himself to face and have patience with difficult people (as in 2.1, 5.10, 9.42, 10.36), thereby imitating the gods' forbearance with human beings in general (7.70, 9.11, 27).

Intransigence can also lead to the kind of grandstanding that, far from being effective, actually has serious negative political consequences. From Cicero's perspective, Cato's attempt to bring corrupt jurors to trial merely succeeded in unleashing political unrest. Marcus Aurelius rejects the trappings of

traditional power exemplified in Alexander, Philip, and Demetrius, but also refuses to buy into a utopian alternative. Hinting at and rejecting Plato's notion of social conditioning, he claims that if we cannot change people's convictions, obedience turns into slavery. An earlier Stoic like Posidonius (135–51 BC) apparently could still believe, along Plato's lines, that people would voluntarily submit to rulers gifted with reason, because they recognized that this submission would be in their interest. Posidonius both projected this scenario onto a previous Golden Age (Seneca, *Epistulae* 90.5) and thought he had discovered an actual historical example in the Black Sea tribe of the Mariandynians (F60 Edelstein Kidd; see also Plato, *Laws* 776D). Marcus Aurelius, in contrast, altogether discarded such hopes.

The position Marcus defends here is the most difficult imaginable: to work for the best and do what one can, but without ostentation and expecting only modest results. 'Even the smallest step forward' would not be 'negligible'. And to achieve such modest goals, one should not wait or hope for optimal conditions to do 'what nature demands this very moment'. No trappings of power, no rewards of glory, and no spectacular results: is this a Roman emperor or someone trying to stem a tide with his bare hands? The answer is neither. Marcus Aurelius was an emperor who had at his disposal a court, an impressive administrative apparatus, and a formidable military force, who was meticulous in respecting protocol, and yet who also refused to have his sense of self be taken over by this role and status.

3. Reason and Sociability

Virtue, according to the Stoics, consists in reason functioning properly; nothing else besides virtue constitutes a good or contributes to happiness. But if these claims hold, it is far from obvious how social responsibility and concern for others would fit in.⁶ How can Marcus Aurelius defend the primacy of justice as an other-directed virtue and of social responsibility that permeates his writings? By a move that is as brilliant as it is simple, and that gives an almost formulaic quality to a position implied in the views of other Stoics: to be rational is to be social (10.2). Sociability is intrinsic to rationality.⁷

Again a property of a rational soul is love of one's neighbor, and truthfulness, and reverence, and to regard nothing higher than itself – which is also a property of law. Thus there is no difference between right reason and the reason that governs justice. (11.1)

Note that this claim does not work in the other direction: not all sociability derives from reason; animals display social behavior too, and animals' care for

their young is a stock example of sociability. Yet, as Cicero also does not hesitate to point out (*De Finibus* 3.62), sociability applies to human beings *a fortiori* because it is ultimately anchored in the divine principle, and human beings are the only living things sharing in divine reason, a point clearly underscored by Marcus Aurelius as well:

So right from the outset there can be found among the irrational animals hives, flocks, birds rearing their young, and forms of love: for souls are already involved, and in the higher orders an increasingly strong bond, which is not present in plants or stones or wood. And among the rational animals there are political communities, friendships, households, gatherings, and in war treaties and truces. Among yet higher things there exists of sort of unity even from a distance, as with the stars. Thus the upper reach of the scale can create an affinity even when the members are far apart. (9.9 part)

Hence, to claim that human beings are social by nature, as a phrase derived from Aristotle would have it,⁸ is not sufficient to convey the force of the Stoic stance: human beings are social in function specifically of their god-given rational capacity.

you have forgotten this point, how close the kinship is of a human being with the entire human race, because it is a bond not of blood or seed but of mind. You have also forgotten this point, that the mind of each of us is a god and has emanated from there. (12.26)

A number of equally crucial corollaries reinforce the claim that to be rational is to be social. ‘Delight and rest in this one thing, in passing from one action that serves the common to the next, being mindful of god’ (6.7). Why would one need to keep god in mind while engaging in action on behalf of others? Because the Stoic divine principle, unlike Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover, is the ground of sociability; like human reason it is *koinônikos*, the key term Marcus Aurelius uses for community.

The mind of the whole cares for the common good. At any rate, it has made the lower for the sake of the higher, and harmonized the higher to one another. You can see how it has subordinated, co-ordinated, and assigned to each a place according to value, and brought the ruling beings together in agreement. (5.30)

Even though Marcus Aurelius uses *koinônikos* for both the divine principle and human interaction, there is an essential difference between these two modes of sociability (Reydams-Schils (2005b) 579–96). Strictly speaking there is no outside dimension with which the divine principle interacts; there is only the unfolding of the structure of the universe in each phase of cosmic ordering

(*diakosmêsis*). The divine principle constitutes the whole, in the sense of the universe. Human beings, on the other hand, like the other components of the universe, are only parts of a whole, and have to deal with the exteriority of other parts.⁹ Yet all things are related to one another because they owe their existence to the divine principle that permeates all of them and constitutes their origin. As mentioned already, there is a special kinship among human beings and between humans and the divine because both partake of reason (as in 5.34, 12.26).

If sociability is intrinsic to reason, then it follows that the communal sense derived from reason would belong to the category of the good. Marcus Aurelius does in fact make this step:

It follows that the *good* of a rational being is the common bond. (5.16)

It is not in feeling but in action that the good and evil of a rational political being lies; just as his virtue or wickedness lies not in feeling but in action. (9.16)

The second note also brings in the notion of virtue, and thus it is too that Marcus Aurelius can claim that a rationality devoid of the social dimension actually falls short of the mark, by rewriting the Stoic scale of nature:

Most of the things which ordinary people admire may be referred to the broad category of things that are held together by physical cohesion (*hexis*), as with stones and timber, or by organic growth (*phusis*), as with figs, vines and olives; and those which are admired by people of still greater discrimination to things which are held together by animal soul (*psuchê*), as with flocks and herds; and those which are admired by people of still greater refinement to things which are held together by rational soul (*logikê psuchê*), not, however, that which is rational in the fullest sense (*katho logikê*), but merely in so far as it possesses a technical skill or some other instrumental capacity . . . But he who prizes the soul in so far as it is fully rational and is concerned for society will no longer turn his mind to all the rest, but strives above all to ensure that his own soul remains rational and sociable in itself and in its activity and co-operates to that end with those who are like of nature. (6.14, trans. Hard, cf. also 3.16)

Here Marcus Aurelius goes beyond the standard Stoic distinctions among existing things between the levels of cohesion, nature, soul, and rational soul to posit that rationality in the full sense entails sociability, and that without the latter people mistake a mere technical skill for reason. Solving complicated logical puzzles and syllogisms, for instance, does not constitute what human reason ultimately is *for*. This passage is in keeping with Marcus Aurelius' insistence that whereas the lower levels of nature are there to serve the higher, the rational human beings are meant to serve one another, which we already discussed above.

Finally like virtue, benefiting others brings its own reward, and does not require any further compensation:

Every time you have done a good deed and someone else has been treated well, why do you seek as a third outcome in addition to these, as fools do, to acquire the reputation of having done good, or to obtain a favor in return? (7.73)

No one grows tired of being benefited, and bestowing benefits is an act according to nature; so never grow weary of being benefitted by bestowing benefits. (7.74)

For tell me, man, when you have done a good turn, what more do you want? Is it not enough that in doing this, you have acted according to your own nature, that you should go on to seek a reward for it? It is just as if the eye sought compensation for seeing, or the feet for walking. For as these were made to perform a particular function, and by performing it according to their own constitution, gain in full what is due to them, so, likewise, man is formed by nature to benefit others, and when he has performed some benevolent action or accomplished anything else that contributes to the common good, he has done what he was constituted for, and has what is properly his. (9.42 part, trans. Hard)

Have I done something on behalf of the common good? Then I have already benefitted. Keep this thought always at hand and never desist. (11.4)

In sum, and this outcome is quite stunning, drawing on his connection between reason and care for others Marcus Aurelius has developed every step needed to insert sociability and justice into the tight Stoic alignment of reason, the good, virtue, and happiness.

4. Exercising One's Social Ability

This same feature of his approach is also clearly discernible in his appropriation of Epictetus' three types of exercises:

He said [Epictetus] that we

- (a) 'must find an art of assent (*to sugkatatithesthai*),
- (b) and under the heading of impulses (*hormai*), pay attention that
 - (i) they be subject to reservation (*met' hupexaireseôs*) and that
 - (ii) they aim at the common good (*koinônikai*) and that
 - (iii) they are proportionate to value (*kat' axian*)
- (c) and we should abstain completely from desire (*orexis*), and not try to avoid (*ekklisis*) anything that is not up to us'. (11.37)

Marcus Aurelius has made the distinctions which he here contributes to Epictetus his own in other notes (cf. 8.7).

The three types of exercises that are a central structuring device in Epictetus' expositions concern (a) assent, which deals primarily with the art of reasoning and forming correct judgments, or logic; (c) desire (and aversion), which also entails aligning one's own will with that of the Providence governing the universe, a topic that falls under the heading of theology as the highest branch of physics; and (b) impulse, which concerns ethics in action, and also encompasses duties towards others.¹⁰ (The original Greek of this passage is considerably more compact than the English rendering, has a noticeably formulaic quality, and reads as a summary statement derived from Epictetus.)

Marcus Aurelius adds three features (i–iii) to the exercise of impulse, which is meant to govern our actions, and it makes sense to read these features as belonging together and mutually illuminating. If that is the case, concern for others (ii) again is central to how one should conduct oneself (in 8.7, for instance, being directed towards social action is the only feature listed of impulse). But how does this feature reflect on the other two mentioned, that impulse should occur 'with reservation' (i) and be 'according to value' (iii)?

The first feature, 'reservation', stipulates that whenever one undertakes an action one should remind oneself both that one cannot control the outcome and that any outcome, even if it runs counter to one's original intentions, is in keeping with the higher reason that governs the universe as a whole, and hence is good. It is a matter of debate what exactly the role of 'reservation' was in original Stoic doctrine,¹¹ but most of our evidence on this topic comes from the later Stoics Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. It is clear from those later passages, and especially from Marcus Aurelius' use, that 'reservation' has a particularly important role to play in our interactions with others. While working for the common good, one cannot force other people to do the right thing, as the passage about rejecting Plato's ideal state also points out, and one needs forbearance and patience when encountering people who are falling short.

The following passage confirms this emphasis on the importance of 'reservation' in social interaction:

From one point of view, human beings are the beings who are closest to us, in so far as we must do good to our fellows and show them forbearance; but in so far as any of them stand in the way of our closest duties, a human being then comes to be one of the things that are indifferent to me, no less than the sun, or the wind, or a wild beast. Now these may hinder one or other of my actions, but they are not hindrances to my impulses or my disposition, because I have the power to act under reservation and turn circumstances to my own advantage. For the mind adapts and converts everything that impedes its activities into something that advances its purpose, and a hindrance to its action becomes an aid, and an obstacle on its path helps it on its way. (5.20, trans. Hard)

This passage makes its case in three steps. First it considers human beings from the angle of one's disposition towards them, governed by benevolence and forbearance. Next it considers the problematic case of others turning into obstacles to carrying out one's duties, when they become like absolute indifferents, that is, in Stoic terminology, things that fall outside of the scale of value altogether. But the note does not end here. Others may be able to prevent outcomes, but they cannot affect one's impulses and disposition. 'Reservation', then, denotes not only passive acceptance, but also empowerment of the individual in his freedom. This freedom manifests itself in 'converting' obstacles into opportunities for advancing one's cause.¹² Though Marcus Aurelius does not spell out what he means by this claim, we can imagine scenarios in which such a 'conversion' (*peritropê*) could happen, as when, for instance, others can learn from the right attitude towards such challenges and hence could benefit from the example set. (This scenario is a common trope in accounts addressed to rulers in order to invoke their clemency, such as Cicero's *Pro Marcello* or Seneca's *De Clementia*.)

In addition to applying concern for the common good and reservation to our impulses, Marcus Aurelius stipulates that we need to adjust these 'according to value'. 'Preferred indifferents' constitute the controversial Stoic category of things, such as health and sustenance, that, while not belonging with the good in the strict sense, do have some value and are to be preferred over their counter-parts, implying that unless circumstances indicate otherwise, they are to be pursued. Unless there is a good reason not to, human beings can be expected, for instance, to prefer health over sickness. (And a good reason could be to sacrifice one's own health for the sake of others, if there is not enough medicine to go around; or to refuse to obtain medicine through dishonorable means.) Although the category of 'preferred indifferents' is hardly in evidence in Marcus Aurelius' writings, the notion of value is broader than the category of the good, and includes the latter. Adjusting impulse according to value would allow for different levels of value, beyond the good in the strict sense, and hence at least leaves room for the notion of 'preferred indifferents' (cf. also 11.16).

Ethics in action is Marcus Aurelius' primary concern in his reflections, and that approach, in turn, is governed by the concern for justice and the common good, that is, by the concern for others and sociability. Viewed from this angle, 'reservation' does not connote detachment and indifference, but, on the contrary, makes possible a sustained commitment to efforts on behalf of others. It creates a remarkable equilibrium between a hard-nosed, and at times even caustic, realism about all too real challenges and the ideal of a community of reason.

In the longest and most systematic of all the notes (11.18) Marcus Aurelius goes to the extent of listing nine reminders for dealing with others, urging himself to consider (1) that human beings are meant to assist each other and he

was born to preside over them; (2) how others conduct themselves, and on the basis of which principles; (3) that if they act rightly, there is no need to be angry; if they act wrongly, they do so involuntarily (in which case anger is not called for either); (4) that he himself is (i.e. all of us are) prone to wrongdoings; (5) that one cannot know for certain that any given action is wrong; (6) if one is on the verge of losing one's patience, that human life is but a passing moment; (7) that it is not people's actions that trouble us, but our own judgments; (8) that anger brings more distress than what causes it; and (9) that kindness and tact are the only appropriate responses – as well as signs of true manliness, as he goes on to expound. Reminders 3 through 9 all focus on forbearance, specifically in avoiding anger. As a tenth rule, a supplement provided by Apollo to the nine 'Muses,' i.e. rules, already laid out, Marcus Aurelius states that, as it would be madness to expect the bad not to do wrong, it would be both senseless and tyrannical to expect that they would aim their harm only at others, and not oneself.

5. Self and Others

Whereas before we raised the question how the Stoic notion of virtue and happiness could allow for sociability, now a new worry may emerge, namely, whether Marcus Aurelius has gone to the other extreme and lost sight of the self and individual happiness altogether. The individual self would seem threatened on two fronts: it could lose itself in the overarching divine reason that governs the universe, as is expressed in the notion that our reason is some kind of indwelling demon or *daimonion*, a liminal being;¹³ or it could become submerged in the common good that embraces all human beings. Christopher Gill ((2006) 325–407) seems to strike the right cord when he makes the case that there is no new sense of *subjectivity* to be found in the discourse of the self in later Stoics such as Marcus Aurelius. The self is too much anchored in an objective-participant perspective for this to occur: objective because it is beholden to a normative standard that applies to all human beings, indeed to all of reality ('nature' is never an ethically neutral notion for the Stoics); participant because it is always part of a larger web of relations. Yet the discourse of the self does figure prominently in these accounts, and the Stoics and Marcus Aurelius have an answer to the double problem mentioned above, captured in a paradox.

First, while it is true that Stoicism in its later form perhaps cannot do justice to individuality in its fullest sense – but then again later attempts in the history of philosophy that do address this issue may conjure up their own problems – it is also the case that of all ancient systems of thought, it makes the most room for individuality. Given that a Stoic strives towards the ideal of reason in whichever

condition and circumstances of life he finds himself, these constitute tasks and challenges that are specific to an individual. In Stoicism this notion is most clearly expressed, but not limited to, Panaetius' four *personae* that apply to all human beings, yet can yield distinctive, possibly even unique, configurations (Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.107–17): (1) the nature all human beings have in common, which is characterized by rationality; (2) each person's individual disposition, bodily, temperamental, and mental; (3) the circumstances that govern one's position in life; and (4) individual choices about how to lead one's life, such as the choice of an occupation.

Even though there is nothing uniquely individual about the Stoic ideal of reason as such, it is also not heteronomous as a normative framework merely imposed from without; we do carry this normative perspective in our own minds and souls (6.40, 8.56). And this point brings us to the paradox already alluded to, and which has emerged clearly in some of the previously discussed passages:

so never grow weary of being benefitted by bestowing benefits. (7.74 part)

so, likewise, man is formed by nature to benefit others, and when he has performed some benevolent action or accomplished anything else that contributes to the common good, he has done what he was constituted for, and has what is properly his. (9.42 part, trans. Hard)

How can Marcus Aurelius, or any other Stoic for that matter, claim that concern for others does not compete with one's own well-being? Let us recall the alignment of reason, virtue, the good, and happiness. By 'benefiting others' a human being is also 'benefiting himself', because the ideal of reason as intrinsically social constitutes the self that is worth preserving and is the locus of happiness. In this instance, the reverse is also true: while concentrating on the self as properly understood, in the interiorized ideal of reason, one will inevitably end up benefiting others.

But not only does Marcus Aurelius categorically deny that the concern for the common good would entail putting aside or even sacrificing one's own happiness, the ideal of reason also has to respect the inalienable autonomy of others. This point emerges clearly from the passage about Plato:

For who can change people's conviction, and without a change of convictions what else do we get but subservience of those who sigh against it and who make a pretense of obeying. (9.29 part)

One cannot impose one's vision for the common good on others; they, in turn, have to interiorize philosophy's injunctions and activate the normative perspective they carry within themselves, in their own reason.

In his *Meditations* Marcus Aurelius may be leaving behind the role of a Roman emperor, but his self-reflections keep him connected to others and to his responsibility for justice and the common good. And so, as the many composite words and neologisms with the prefix *sun-* also attest (van Ackeren (2011) I.5.2), to reflect on the good, even in one's most private moments, always entails thinking along with others, human and divine.

NOTES

- * Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.
- 1. Cf. also 2.1, 4.4, 40, 7.9, 9.8.
- 2. Cf. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 2.133, 158–62; Seneca, *Epistulae* 65.24; Nemesius, *De Natura Hominis* 1.11–14; *SVF* 2.528.
- 3. As in 5.16, 30, 7.55, 8.59, 9.1, 9.9, 11.18; cf. also Diogenes Laertius 7.129; Cicero, *De Finibus* 3.67, and Porphyry, *De Abstinencia* 3.20.
- 4. Cf. 2.3, 17, 4.36, 7.18, 9.31, and 10.7.
- 5. Cicero, *Ad Atticum* 2.1 = 21 Shackleton Bailey, 8; Plutarch, *Phocion* 3.1.
- 6. The scholarly debate on this issue usually focuses on the Stoic notion of *oikeiôsis* ('appropriation'). This notion stipulates that animals and human beings come naturally equipped with a self-awareness and self-love that directs them towards self-preservation. The question then becomes how one could reconcile 'appropriation' to oneself with other-directed 'appropriation'. On this issue, cf. also Inwood (1996) 243–64, and Algra (2003) 265–96. But construed in this manner, the question may be a bit of a red herring, because, as Julia Annas ((1993) 270–74) has already pointed out, the so-called personal and social aspects of 'appropriation' always go hand in hand; cf. also Reydam-Schils (2002) 221–51, integrated into Reydam-Schils (2005a).
- 7. As in 3.7, 5.29, 6.44, 7.55, 64, 68, 72, 8.2, 12, 26, 43, 10.2; see also Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.50, 153; Epictetus, *Dissertationes* 3.3.8, 4.6.35; cf. also Engberg-Pedersen (1998) 330–34.
- 8. Cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1253a7–18, where he singles out human beings' gift of speech and awareness of good and evil, and *Historia Animalium* 487b33–488a10. A crucial and often-debated problem is presented by his description of the contemplative life, the highest virtue and use of reason, as not community-oriented (*Nicomachean Ethics* 10.7), so that, put succinctly, for him reason is not intrinsically social.
- 9. As in 2.9, 4.14, 29, 5.8, 7.13: on organic unity, 8.34, 10.6, 11.8.
- 10. Although the distribution of logic, physics, and ethics among these three exercises does not constitute a sharp demarcation, this analysis originally proposed by Pierre Hadot (1993) and (1998) is still an invaluable hermeneutic key to both Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius.
- 11. Cf. the debate between Brennan (2000) 149–77 and Brunschwig (2005) 357–80; the one other author who mentions 'reservation' is Stobaeus

(2.115.5 Wachsmuth), and the ‘Arius Didymus’ doxography in that source attributes a wider range to ‘reservation’, including also ‘desire’ (*orexis*) and ‘inclination’ (*epibolê*). One passage in Epictetus (*Dissertationes* 2.6.9ff.) hints at Chrysippus’ use of the notion.

12. As in 4.1, 6.50, 8.32, 35, 10.33.

13. As in 2.13, 17, 3.4, 12, 16, 5.10, 27.

FURTHER READING

Brunt (1974) and Rosen (1996) provide a good introduction to the basic issues in ethics and politics for Marcus Aurelius. Foucault’s analysis (2001), with many close readings of specific passages, opens up Hadot’s work ((1993) and (1998)) to this social dimension. A more in-depth analysis can be found in Annas (2002), Reydam-Schils (2005a), and van Ackeren (2011), with the latter also assessing how the form of Marcus Aurelius’ writings contributes to this theme. Reydam-Schils (2005a) discusses the broader context for Marcus Aurelius’ views on sociability by grouping him together with Seneca, Epictetus, and Musonius Rufus. Vogt (2008) analyzes the original Hellenistic Stoic views about cosmopolitanism and law, and Graver (2007) the views about emotions, including good emotions that leave considerable room for affection for others. Long’s study of Epictetus (2002) and Gill (2006) are helpful companion studies for this section.

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CHAPTER 29

The *Meditations* and the Ancient Art of Living

John Sellars

1. Marcus' Project

In the *Meditations* Marcus Aurelius makes a number of oblique references to the idea that he is engaged in an activity that is an art or craft. At 4.2 he tells us not to undertake any action that is not in accord with the principles of the art. By art (*technê*) it seems reasonable to assume he means philosophy, if philosophy embodies those principles according to which one ought to act, and a recent translation expansively renders *technê* here as 'the art of life' (Hammond (2006) 23). At 5.1 Marcus draws a comparison between what he must do and what practitioners of other arts do, the implication perhaps being that he too is the practitioner of an art – one devoted to becoming a complete human being. At 6.16 we find a more explicit parallel between what Marcus is doing and what other craftsmen do. Just as the horse trainer takes care of horses, for instance, making them fit for their task, so too Marcus must train himself to act or refrain from acting according to the appropriate principles. Like other arts and crafts, Marcus' task has a clear practical goal, and the references to horse trainers and to taking care of oneself remind us of the *technê* analogy drawn by Socrates in the *Apology* (esp. 25a–b). We find a similar parallel with other examples of craftsmen at 6.35. At 7.68 Marcus says that his art, the art of humankind, is the exercise of rational and social virtue, while at 11.5 he responds to the question 'what is your art?' with the reply 'to be good', adding that it is only with the aid of a theoretical understanding of both Nature and humankind that he will be able to achieve this (cf. Farquharson (1944) 860).

These passages indicate that Marcus conceived his own activity as some sort of craft-like activity with a specific set of closely inter-related goals, including making correct judgments, choosing the right actions, becoming virtuous, and fulfilling his proper function as a rational human being. We never find an explicit formal definition of philosophy as an art or craft devoted to these goals but it would perhaps be unrealistic to expect one in this sort of text. Instead what we find are a series of reminders and ‘notes to self’ in which Marcus tries to keep in focus the nature of the task he has at hand.

Although Marcus may not be as explicit as we should like, his Stoic predecessor Epictetus is a little more forthcoming. Epictetus was of course an important influence on Marcus: there are over a dozen quotations from Epictetus in the *Meditations* (second only to Plato) and at 1.7 Marcus thanks his tutor Rusticus for having introduced him to Epictetus and lending him a copy of the *Discourses*. It is in the *Discourses* (presented to us by Arrian as his report of what went on in Epictetus’ classroom) that we see Epictetus present philosophy as an art and, in particular, as an art concerned with how to live (*Discourses* 1.15.2):

Philosophy does not promise to secure anything external for man, otherwise it would be admitting something that lies beyond its proper subject-matter (*hulê*). For just as wood is the material (*hulê*) of the carpenter, bronze that of the statue maker, so each individual’s own life is the subject-matter/material (*hulê*) of the art of living.

This notion that philosophy be conceived as an art of living (*technê peri ton bion*) sounds as if it might be a very broad notion, potentially encompassing a wide variety of ancient philosophers, but almost all of the references to an art of living in ancient sources have some connection to the Stoics. Beyond Epictetus there are references connected to Chrysippus, Posidonius, and Arius Didymus’ epitome of Stoic ethics, while the only sustained analysis of this idea in antiquity is to be found in Sextus Empiricus, as part of his polemic against Stoic ethics. The most obvious Latin equivalents (*ars vitae* and *ars vivendi*) can be found in Cicero and Seneca, again in contexts connecting the idea with the Stoics (for a full list of references see Sellars (2003) 5). The idea that philosophy be conceived as a *technê*, then, and in particular as a *technê* devoted to transforming one’s *bios*, was a Stoic idea and one that Marcus the Stoic seems likely to have held.

2. Socrates and the Stoic Art of Living

The Stoic conception of philosophy as an art of living combines two ideas: first that philosophy is fundamentally concerned with how one should live, and

second that it ought to be conceived in analogy with arts and crafts. Both of these ideas were inherited from Socrates.

In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates makes clear that his philosophical mission is directed towards the transformation of his life: his divine mission is to *live* as a philosopher and this means subjecting his *life* to criticism because the unexamined *life* is not worth living (Plato, *Apology* 28e, 39c, 38a). In order to complete this divine mission Socrates goes in search of those with a reputation for knowledge and, given his own practical goal, focuses his attention on practitioners of arts and crafts. This, of course, becomes a central concern throughout the early Platonic dialogues, but the most sustained analysis of arts and crafts appears in the *Gorgias*, where Socrates draws a distinction between arts that take care of the body and arts that take care of the soul (Plato, *Gorgias* 463a–466a). This analysis lays the foundations for an analogy between medicine, the art that cures the body, and philosophy, the art that cures the soul. This analogy would prove to be an important influence on the Stoics and would gain a wider currency in the subsequent history of philosophy via Cicero's account in the *Tusculan Disputations*.

It is worth noting at this point that for a Socratic or a Stoic this art that cures the soul is effectively the same thing as an art of living. This is due to the unified, monistic conception of the soul that both Socrates and the Stoics held. On this account of the soul, there is no room for weakness of will (*akrasia*) for the soul is a single rational faculty that is never impeded by other mental entities such as desires or emotions. Consequently, transformations in the soul will automatically result in transformations in action (see Sellars (2003) 167–69).

One of the central features of philosophy conceived as an art (of living or of curing the soul) is brought out well in the analogy with medicine. This analogy is highly appropriate because medicine is an art that is built upon a complex body of theoretical knowledge and yet is primarily concerned with delivering practical outcomes. Knowledge of medicine requires not only a grasp of the theoretical principles involved but also a period of training or exercise in which those principles can be digested or assimilated into oneself. When learning an art or craft like medicine it is necessary not only to study the formal principles underpinning the art but also to embark on a lengthy apprenticeship during which one learns how to apply those principles in practical situations. This applies to all those activities that are craft-like, as opposed to purely theoretical activities where understanding the key principles alone constitutes knowledge. Thus the shoemaker (to borrow a well-loved Platonic example of a craftsman) needs not only to grasp the principles behind his trade but must also train in order to master putting those principles into practice, during what we would naturally call his apprenticeship. The education of the shoemaker, or the doctor, or any other type of craftsman, will thus require two distinguishable stages: a theoretical education in the classroom followed by a

period of practical training or apprenticeship. Mastery of any art or craft requires these two stages.

Philosophy conceived as an art will also presumably require these two stages: first a period of learning or discovering philosophical ideas and then a second stage designed to digest those ideas so that, just like in other arts and crafts, those ideas can be put into practice. In the *Gorgias* Socrates himself hints at the need for some form of training or exercise (*askêsis*) that would form this second stage (Plato, *Gorgias* 514e, 527d).

These Socratic ideas were taken up and developed by the early Stoics (but, as I have noted, not by any other school of ancient philosophers). As is often the case, however, our knowledge of the early Stoic position is fragmentary and it is only in later texts that we find these ideas discussed in any detail. For example, later Stoics such as Seneca and Epictetus took up and developed the idea that philosophy be thought of as an art of living, while the only extended critical discussion of the idea came a little later still from Sextus Empiricus, repeated in both his *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (3.25) and *Against the Professors* (Book 11, also referred to as *Against the Ethicists*). However, the idea was clearly in circulation much earlier as numerous references in the works of Cicero attest. Indeed, it is in Cicero that we find an account of the way in which the Stoics took up Socrates' analogy between philosophy and medicine (*Tusculan Disputations* 3.1–21) and it has been suggested that Cicero's discussion draws directly on the works of Chrysippus. We have further, explicit, evidence for the claim that Chrysippus took up the Socratic analogy in Galen's *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* (5.1–2), who reports that for Chrysippus philosophy is an art concerned with curing the diseased soul and that the philosopher is the physician of the soul (5.2.22–23). The idea of taking care of one's soul is of course also a central theme in the *Meditations*, because 'those who fail to attend to the motions of their own soul are necessarily unhappy' (2.8).

For the Stoics too, then, philosophy was conceived as an art analogous to the art of medicine and, like medicine and other arts and crafts, mastery of philosophy conceived as an art will involve an education in two stages. While the first stage will be devoted to understanding the theoretical principles underpinning the art, the second stage will involve a period of training or exercise devoted to the assimilation and mastery of those principles. Thus, it will not be enough merely to grasp complex philosophical ideas in the classroom; one must also engage in a period of training in order to digest those principles so that one is ready to put them into practice. The point behind this is forcefully put by Epictetus when he laments that although many of his Stoic students will be able to express eloquently the central doctrines of the Stoic Chrysippus, few will be able to display those same doctrines in their behavior (*Discourses* 2.19.20–25). He predicts that most will in fact turn out to

be Epicureans, with perhaps a few feeble Peripatetics, but he doubts he will find any Stoics among these students who are nevertheless perfectly able to recite Stoic doctrine. Theoretical understanding on its own is not enough.

This issue had been discussed a few decades earlier by Seneca in a pair of letters (*Letters* 94 and 95) in which he considers the relationship between doctrines (*decreta*) and precepts (*praecepta*). Seneca argues that both of these are necessary for moral improvement, for guidance without the underpinning of rational understanding could not possibly lead to a genuine transformation, while rational understanding alone is not enough and must be supplemented with some form of practical training (see Sellars (2003) 75–78; Sellars (2007) 122–24). The upshot of holding what we might call this technical conception of philosophy (using technical in its etymological sense) is that a philosophical education will divide into these two stages. One might object to this as an account of how the Stoics conceived philosophy by noting that the Stoics were also followers of Socratic intellectualism, embracing his monistic psychology and so his rejection of weakness of will. If that is so, then surely mastery of theoretical principles ought on its own to be enough. Why is this second stage needed as well? One might respond to this sort of objection by saying that it presupposes that mastery of theoretical principles alone constitutes knowledge, whereas according to the technical conception of philosophy held by the Stoics knowledge should be identified with complete practical mastery displayed in one's behavior. Epictetus' students who have grasped Stoic doctrine do not yet have knowledge worthy of the name if those doctrines remain unexpressed in their actions. It is only when they act from those doctrines that they can be said to have properly mastered them and gained real knowledge conceived as craft-type knowledge. Once they have done this, weakness of will is indeed impossible. The implication here is that the ability to recite doctrine is not adequate evidence for a genuine transformation of one's soul; only the appropriate behavior confirms that the soul has been cured in any meaningful sense.

3. Types of Philosophical Text

Epictetus' students read treatises by Chrysippus and presumably works by other canonical Stoic authors as well. These texts, so far as we can know, probably met many of our expectations about what a philosophical text should contain: the presentation of key doctrines supported by argument, perhaps responding to objections raised by others or responding to alternative views articulated in the works of earlier philosophers. In short, they might have looked something like the texts of Aristotle, Sextus Empiricus, or Galen that have come down to us.

The *Meditations* clearly do not fall into this genre of philosophical writing, a genre that for some might seem to be the only obvious form of philosophical writing there could be. Indeed, at first glance the *Meditations* do not look much like what we usually think of as a philosophical text. What we encounter appears to be a notebook containing private thoughts and reflections, along with a few quotations copied from other authors, with no immediately obvious structure or chain of reasoning, often repeating similar ideas across its different books. Via the quotations and other passing references we do find mention of a number of earlier philosophers, including Heraclitus, Plato, and Epictetus, but their views are not subjected to any critical analysis or sustained commentary. It should not be too surprising, then, if on a first encounter many modern readers are unlikely to judge the *Meditations* a serious philosophical text.

The title *Meditations* is a modern one, used for the first time by Meric Casaubon in 1634. This English choice of title was not reflected in early translations into other modern European languages and did not even win universal adoption in England for quite some time (see Wickham Legg (1910)). Nevertheless, it has since caught on and has done so presumably because it seems appropriate to the contents. If what we find does not meet our expectations for a philosophical text then the meditative, reflective, and contemplative tone of the text may make it appear more at home alongside certain sorts of spiritual texts, such as perhaps Augustine's *Confessions*, Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, or François de Sales's *Introduction to the Devout Life*. It might seem to share even more in common with modern collections of moral maxims and aphorisms by writers such as Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, or even Nietzsche. The *Meditations* seem far more at home alongside texts from either of these two groups than they do alongside canonical philosophical works such as those of Aristotle or Leibniz or Kant.

Although the *Meditations* might not take the form of a philosophical treatise, whether by Chrysippus or Aristotle or some modern philosopher, they may nevertheless deserve to be counted as a philosophical text. If those sorts of theoretical treatises correspond only to one half of a philosophical education as it is conceived within the context of a technical conception of philosophy then there may well be other forms of philosophical writing associated with the second half. The *Meditations* look like a good candidate for an example of a text devoted to this second stage.

4. Assimilation and Digestion

What exactly will this second stage of philosophical education involve? Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus himself all offer some helpful analogies. For Seneca and Epictetus the preferred analogy is with digestion. Seneca suggests (*Letters*

2.2–4) that in order to digest properly the ideas of an author one must read slowly and one ought not to jump too quickly from one author to another. If one is too greedy or has too varied or rich a diet one runs the risk of vomiting the whole lot up and failing to digest anything at all. Epictetus pursues this unsavory image by comparing the hasty discourses of his students to vomit (*Discourses* 3.21.1–4), in which they throw up philosophical ideas out of their mouths before they have had the opportunity to digest them properly. If they had digested them properly then those same doctrines would not come back out of their mouths but rather would be expressed in their actions. Epictetus illustrates this with a more palatable example (*Handbook* 46):

Do not, for the most part, talk among people about your philosophical principles, but do what follows from your principles . . . for sheep do not bring their fodder to the shepherds and show how much they have eaten, but they digest their food within them and on the outside produce wool and milk. And so you, therefore, make no display to people of your philosophical principles but let them see the results that come from the principles when digested.

Marcus himself takes up this theme, with a different analogy (though borrowed from Seneca; see Newman (1989) 1507). He suggests that we should dye our souls in a manner akin to the way in which we might dye a piece of cloth a new color. Our aim is to become ‘dyed to the core with justice’ as he puts it in 3.4 and in order to produce such a complete transformation we shall need to repeat the process again and again. The more we think or reflect on a particular idea, the more that idea will become a permanent feature of our mind, just as a piece of cloth will permanently bear the color of a dye the more it is exposed to it (5.16):

Your mind will take on the character of your most frequent thoughts: souls are dyed by thoughts. So dye your own with a succession of thoughts like these. For example: where life can be lived, so can a good life; but life can be lived in a palace; therefore a good life can be lived in a palace.

Here we have an explicit philosophical explanation for the repetition of certain key ideas again and again in the *Meditations*. While this feature of the text has often been explained away as an unfortunate consequence of this being a private text never properly edited or prepared for wider circulation, we can now see that far from being a structural fault this may well be an essential and necessary characteristic of the text. If what Marcus was trying to do when writing in his notebooks was dye his soul by repeatedly reflecting upon key ideas then it is inevitable that the text should be marked by repetition. Without the repetition Marcus would not be able to complete the task at hand. As Marcus’

own physician Galen put it, when discussing the nature of the *askêsis* (exercise) involved in becoming a good human being, ‘if a proposition is of great importance, there is no harm in repeating it twice or even three times’ (*De Affectuum Dignotione* 5 (15,16–18 de Boer)). And in his treatise on character (*Peri êthôn, De Moribus*), lost in Greek but preserved in the Arabic tradition, Galen writes ‘a character is developed through being constantly accustomed to things that man sets up in his soul and to things that he does regularly every day’ (Mattock (1972) 241).

5. Writing the Self

This notion that through a process of repetitive writing one might engage in a process of self-transformation is one that Michel Foucault addressed in a short piece entitled *Writing the Self* (Foucault (1997)). In this brief essay Foucault explores the role of writing in what he calls ‘arts of the self’ and ‘the art of living’ (Foucault (1997) 234–35). He explicitly draws a parallel between Greco-Roman philosophy and what he calls ‘professional skill’, suggesting that, like any other professional skill, the art of living will require some form of *askêsis* (exercise), which he defines as ‘a training of the self by the self’ (Foucault (1997) 235). It is through writing, he suggests, that we find some traces of these sorts of self-fashioning practices. Although various forms of philosophical *askêsis* date back at least to the Cynics (see Goulet-Cazé (1986)), and perhaps back even further to the Pythagoreans (see Kahn (2001)), Foucault notes that it is only in the Imperial period that we find writing explicitly discussed as a form of philosophical training, most notably by late Stoics such as Seneca (e.g. *Letters* 84) and Epictetus (e.g. *Discourses* 3.24.103). Foucault goes on to examine two types of writing from this period – notebooks and correspondence – which seem to be potential candidates for precisely the sort of writing he has in mind, although he prefaces his discussion of these two forms of writing with the claim that they are different from the sort of transformative writing he has just introduced and which he labels ‘ethopoetic’ (Foucault (1997) 236). Nevertheless, his account of the role of these texts is instructive when thinking about the *Meditations*. He suggests that notebooks contained

quotations, fragments of works, examples, and actions of which one had been the witness or had read . . . they would offer them thus as treasures accumulated for later rereading and meditation. (Foucault (1997) 236)

With correspondence, he suggests, we have texts that not only offer an opportunity for reflective meditation but also for constructing a narrative of

oneself and, alongside examples from Seneca and Pliny, Foucault cites Marcus' correspondence with Fronto (Foucault (1997) 244).

In the *Meditations* we find examples of all of the features that Foucault attributes to these three different types of writing (ethopoetic, notebooks, correspondence). We have a text with a clear ethopoetic aim of self-transformation; we have occasional strings of quotations from other authors that we might expect to find in a notebook (concentrated in books 7 and 11); and we often find passages where Marcus seems engaged in a process of constructing a self identity akin to what Foucault sees at work in the correspondence of the period. This variety of activity need not concern us, however, for we are clearly dealing with an informal body of writing that makes no explicit claim to fit neatly into any particular genre. It is striking, though, that the *Meditations* display many of the features associated with this idea of a written philosophical *askêsis* (exercise). I suggest that what we read in the *Meditations* is the text resulting from Marcus engaging in a process of trying to digest philosophical ideas, to dye his soul so that he might become a good man. It is not merely a notebook in the sense of being a collection of material gathered together in order to be reflected upon or reread at a later date; nor is it a coherent attempt at a narrative construction of a self identity, even if it might display elements of both. Instead it is the philosophical equivalent of a schoolboy writing out his lines in order to embed an idea in his mind. It is the very process of writing itself that constitutes the philosophical exercise and the text that has come down to us is simply the by-product of that activity.

This is the sense in which we might think of the *Meditations* as a text related to the second stage of an education directed towards cultivating philosophy conceived as an art of living. It is a product of the necessary process of digestion and assimilation of philosophical doctrine, which comes after the study of doctrine involving the reading of treatises. If we hold a technical conception of philosophy and acknowledge that this second stage is indeed necessary then we shall be able to see the philosophical significance of a text like the *Meditations*. It is not a text straightforwardly to be used by us, its readers, but, as a trace of a process of philosophical exercise, it stands as a record of that exercise and so a model for how we ourselves might proceed.

It is also worth noting that there are no doubt other types of text that we might associate with this second stage of a philosophical education. In particular we might note the *Handbook* of Epictetus. This short text was compiled by Arrian from the *Discourses* of Epictetus, which, we are told, Arrian compiled from his own recollections of conversations that took place in Epictetus' classroom. The *Handbook* is in effect, then, a brief summary of some of the key philosophical themes that run through the *Discourses*, but stripped of the latter's distinctive literary qualities and lacking much of the philosophical justification that the *Discourses* offer for the positions being

advanced. Not surprisingly, some readers have dismissed it as merely a clumsy and uninteresting epitome of the larger work. At the same time a traditional view, drawing on the claims of the Neoplatonist Simplicius in his commentary on the *Handbook*, has held that this is a text for absolute beginners, to be read with little or no background knowledge before they move on to more substantial philosophical works (see Simplicius, *In Enchiridion* Praef. 61–81 Hadot). Both of these judgments are contestable, however. We might equally approach the *Handbook* not as a text for beginners but rather as a text for advanced students, for those engaged in the second stage of philosophical training (see Sellars (2007) 135–38): once the student leaves the classroom he is faced with the task of assimilating and digesting all that he has heard, to the point that he affects a transformation of his soul, which will in turn transform his behavior. The *Handbook*, on this view, is not a text for beginners but rather an aide-mémoire for the philosophical apprentice who has already left the classroom. It does not need to rehearse all of the arguments for the positions it summarizes on the assumption that either the student will be able to recall them or at least feel confident that he has worked through them to his satisfaction during his time in class. Whether Arrian had this function for the text in mind when he composed it, either as a text to be used by others or perhaps simply for his own use, is of course a matter about which we can only speculate. Nevertheless, approaching the *Handbook* in this way enables us to offer a plausible account of its purpose. It also enables us to offer an explanation of its title, for the *enchiridion* is a hand-held weapon or tool of the sort used by craftsmen, and throughout the *Discourses* Epictetus reminds his students to keep their philosophical principles *procheiros*, or ready to hand, and what better way to do this than to carry with them a short, digestible summary of their master's key doctrines. The *Handbook*, then, stands as an example of another type of text, alongside the *Meditations*, relevant to the philosophical training that forms the second stage of philosophy conceived as an art or craft. One is a text to be used by a philosophical apprentice; the other is a text *produced* by such an apprentice. It is nice to think that Marcus had a copy of the *Handbook* close by when composing the *Meditations* on campaign, although there is alas no direct evidence that he possessed a copy. Nevertheless, these two texts stand together as examples of two different types of work devoted to the second stage of a Stoic philosophical education.

As we have seen, then, although the *Meditations* might appear somewhat anomalous at first glance, once we have a better sense of the nature of the philosophical project in which Marcus was engaged we are then able to appreciate their status and value as a properly philosophical text. The project in which he was engaged he inherited from Epictetus but it was one that ran through the entire Stoic school and drew on some central themes in Socrates. Epictetus reports that Socrates himself wrote texts (against the widely held

assumption that Socrates wrote nothing), but characterizes these texts as attempts by Socrates to test and examine himself rather than anything intended for wider consumption (*Discourses* 2.1.29–33). The *Meditations* stand within this Socratic-Stoic tradition of written philosophical exercises contributing to an art of living.

FURTHER READING

The discussion of the Stoic art of living in this chapter draws upon material in Sellars (2003). The Socratic discussion of arts and crafts standing behind the Stoic idea has been discussed widely; one helpful account is Roochnik (1996). The claim that Marcus is engaged in a form of philosophical exercise in the *Meditations* is discussed in Newman (1989) and Hadot ((1998) ch. 3), although neither explicitly places those exercises within a conception of philosophy as an art or craft. The idea of writing as a form of philosophical exercise is explored in Foucault (1997).

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CHAPTER 30

The Self in the *Meditations*

Anthony A. Long

1. Introduction

‘Precepts’ (*parangelmata*) is the earliest attested title for the work we call the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius (Farquharson (1944) vol. 1, xv; vol. 2, 433). The emperor may well have applied this, or an equivalent term, to his philosophical reflections. As a practicing Stoic, he had ample authority for exhorting himself to live up to the school’s demanding regimen. He mentions his own *hypomnemata* (‘memoranda’; 3.14), and he also uses this word in reference to the works of Epictetus (1.7), the Stoic philosopher who influenced him most strongly. However, the earliest manuscript of Marcus’ work calls it *biblia eis heauton*, a phrase that most literally means ‘books to do with myself’, or ‘books for myself’, that is to say, books for my personal use. If this phrase goes back to classical times, it would be a unique title for a work of literature. The Greek expression is commonly rendered ‘books to myself’, but this is a misleading translation because it suggests that Marcus is addressing himself in the way that one does in a personal memoir or autobiography.¹ The *Meditations*, as I will call the work here, does contain personal allusions (most notably in the first book of acknowledgments to all the people Marcus feels indebted to), but what it records, inasmuch as it records anything, is not how he has spent his day but how he seeks to monitor his mind and control his emotional outlook.

In light of this description, how far do Marcus’ exhortations ‘for himself’ offer us material that we can profitably discuss under this chapter’s heading? Does he, in the course of his own reflections for himself, expound or presuppose a theory of *the* self? The answer I will develop in this chapter is a strong affirmative concerning both exposition and presupposition.

No ancient thinker, of course, had an exact equivalent to our substantive 'the self' (which seems to start its philosophical and psychological life at the end of the 19th century), but ancient philosophers, especially the Stoics, had concepts of selfhood that broadly correspond to some basic modern notions. These notions include objective ideas about the psychological structure of human beings in general, as in the Freudian categories of *ego*, *id*, and *superego*. They include the subjective idea of a particular person's essence and identity, as in such expressions as 'not feeling myself today' or 'being true to myself' or 'letting myself down'. And thirdly, they incorporate therapeutic ideas about the necessary conditions for achieving happiness or contentment and for avoiding emotional pathology and psychological instability.

Marcus composes his *Meditations* in the light of well-established Stoic doctrine concerning these structures, norms, and pathologies. But, while sticking close to Epictetus, his principal Stoic authority (Hadot (1998)), he is also quite inventive in the advice he gives about understanding and managing both himself in particular and the self as such. Although he constantly uses 'I' or the singular 'you', and refrains from addressing people in general, his philosophy of selfhood is applicable to anyone committed to living the Stoic life. Much of its effectiveness derives from the author's expository power, which modulates between factual claims about human nature in general and normative claims about the ideally rational self. Befitting a work that is informal, not a philosophical monograph, his language for characterizing selfhood varies from page to page, but his basic model is the same throughout, and founded upon the following Stoic axioms:

- (1) The universe is a physical continuum, governed and permeated throughout by Nature = God = Providence = Reason.
- (2) The Nature of the universe operates by means of a causal nexus ('fate') such that nothing that happens could be otherwise, and, given proposition (1), is always for the good of the whole.
- (3) Human beings are rational animals. As such, their natures or souls are 'offshoots' or 'parts' of universal Nature.
- (4) Notwithstanding the universality of fate, human beings are autonomous agents and completely responsible for their moral character and mental processes.
- (5) Happiness and goodness depend entirely on conforming one's human nature to universal Nature.
- (6) The only unconditional values are virtue (perfected reason) and vice (faulty reason). Everything else is indifferent.

These propositions, or versions of them, are explicit or implicit throughout the *Meditations*. For the present, I will let them stand without further comment

except to call attention to two apparent points of tension – first, the alleged compatibility of fate and autonomy, and second, the coherence of the part/whole relation supposedly existing between individual human natures and universal Nature. Marcus’ injunctions, far from ignoring these tensions, depend on actually maintaining and exploiting them. We shall need, in our conclusion, to face them directly.

As further preparation for approaching his text, the first *Discourse* of Epictetus is an excellent guide. Its theme, ‘the things that are up to us and not up to us’, is most memorably set out in a dialogue that Epictetus imagines himself having with Zeus, who addresses him as follows:

If it had been possible, I would have made your little body (*somation*) and property free and unhindered. But in fact – take note of my words – this is not your own but only artfully moulded clay. Since I could not give you this, I have given you a portion of myself, this faculty of positive and negative impulse and of desire and aversion – the faculty, in short, of using mental impressions. By caring for this and by situating all that is yours therein, you will never be impeded, you will never be restricted, you will not groan or find fault or flatter anyone.²

The freedom specified here is not freedom of action in the sense of bodily independence or an open and undetermined future; Epictetan freedom is entirely internal, signifying authority over one’s motivations and emotional responses to the world. By calling this internal freedom ‘use of mental impressions (*phantasiai*)’, Epictetus envisions an unrestricted capacity for self-determination in respect to one’s judgments, values, and affects. Perfecting this capacity is his standard recipe not only for freedom but also for reverence (*aidemon*) and all other moral excellences. Marcus took the point:

Everywhere and continually it is up to you to be reverently content with your present situation, to behave justly to the people you are with, and to skillfully manage your present impression, so that nothing slips into your mind that you have not thoroughly ascertained. (7.54)

You are to remember that nothing within the boundaries of your flesh and your life-breath [as distinct from your mind] is yours or up to you. (5.33)

2. The Mental Structure of the Human Being

Because the Stoic concept of nature is physical through and through, an incorporeal soul or self, as in Platonism, was not an option for Marcus. All entities, including the cosmos itself, are structures composed of matter and the ever-present corporeal agent variously called God, cause, and the breath

(*pneuma*) that informs and vivifies matter. In the following passage (6.14) Marcus gives his own twist to the four metaphysical distinctions Stoic philosophers posited for classifying types of entity (Origen, *De principiis* 3.1.2–3):

Most items that evoke popular admiration belong to the general class of thing held together either by coherence (*hexis*) or by nature (*physis*), such as stones and logs, or figs, vines, and olives... Somewhat superior people are impressed by things held together by soul (*psyche*), such as flocks or herds, and still more refined people are impressed by things held together by rational soul (*logike psyche*), though not meaning rational as such but skilful or artistic in some way. Yet one who values a soul that is rational and sociable (*politike*) no longer focuses on these other things but above all on keeping his own self (literally ‘his own soul’) in a rationally active and sociable condition, and cooperates with his fellow human being to this end.

The first four categories (*hexis*, *physis*, *psyche*, *logike psyche*) classify things in an ascending scale of complexity, from inanimate, vegetable, generically animal, up to specifically human. Marcus then treats his own notion of the normative self, ‘a soul that is rational and sociable’, as if it were a fifth and supremely refined metaphysical category.³ He takes the sociability of the normative self, one of his constant themes, to be a necessary accompaniment of its rationality. We might suppose that someone dedicated to sociability should be highly extroverted, but Marcus’ characteristically inward turn is essential to his philanthropic goals: he focuses on himself to concentrate on what reason requires of him in his social and political life.

Psyche can often be translated in Marcus by self, as in the last sentence of this passage, but Stoics also used *psyche* to signify the principle of animal life in general. Marcus does so in the third of his classifications. In its strict Stoic usage the *psyche* is an eight-part entity consisting of the five senses, the faculties of voice and reproduction, and ‘the governing part’ called *hegemonikon*, located in the region of the heart.⁴ The Stoics had Platonic precedent for analyzing mental functions by means of political metaphors, but their hegemonic concept of the soul’s principal part was a striking innovation. While every *psyche* has its *hegemonikon*, this governing part is only rational (*logikos*) in the case of adult human beings. For the Stoics, what governs a mature human life is reason through and through, manifested in the governing part’s powers to motivate persons by thoughts, beliefs, and desires. The human *hegemonikon* does not contain any non-rational faculties, but the reason that it constitutes is either correct or incorrect. When it is incorrect, persons act contrary to sound reasoning, and so irrationally.

The Stoic concept of *hegemonikon* is probably the closest any ancient thinker came to formulating a specific term for *the* self. One way to see this is by noting

how in Marcus the word is often associated with reflexive pronouns or possessive adjectives. For instance:

The *hegemonikon* is what activates and adapts *itself*, makes *itself* whatever way it wants, and makes everything that happens appear to *itself* exactly as it wants. (6.8)

How is the *hegemonikon* treating *itself*? Everything turns on this. (12.33)

What am I making of *my hegemonikon*? (10.24)

In the second and third excerpts personal reflexivity is paramount. Marcus could have written (as he does elsewhere) ‘How am I treating myself?’ or ‘What am I making of myself?’ In the first excerpt the principal notions are will, autonomy, and power. Describing oneself in terms of a *hegemonikon* sets up a presumption of first-person agency, authority, and leadership, as in saying ‘I am the master of my soul’. People can, of course, abrogate authority and leadership over themselves. According to Stoicism, as Marcus constantly reminds himself, that is precisely what happens when one gives way to passion, judges things according to false assessments of goodness and badness, and focuses attention away from one’s rational essence.

We are now in a position to consider how Marcus situates the *hegemonikon* within his understanding of the body and the physicalism that was foundational in Stoic philosophy. Here are two cardinal passages:

See to it that the governing (*hegemonikon*) and authoritative part of your soul is not distracted by smooth or rough motion in the flesh [i.e. by pleasurable or painful sensations]. Don’t let it coalesce with them, but have it isolate *itself* and limit these pressures to their own [bodily] parts. But whenever, as a result of the other interaction [i.e. body acting on mind] they present themselves to the mind (*dianoia*), in a unified body’s normal way, you should not try to resist the feeling, natural as it is, but ensure that the governing part (*hegemonikon*) does not, from *itself*, add a judgment concerning the goodness or badness of the feeling. (5.26)

The primary thing in a human being’s constitution is sociability, and the second thing is resistance to bodily pressures; for rational and intelligent activity is marked out by its limiting itself and never being overcome by sensory or impulsive movement. Both of these are merely animal, but intelligent activity seeks to be dominant and not in thrall to these others. (7.55)

Taken together, these two passages express the essence of Marcus’ recommended policy for self-management. Like every other item in the Stoic universe, Marcus is a body. As such, he is liable to affect and be affected by anything he comes into contact with. There are no gaps between his body and its immediate external environment, and more relevantly, there are no gaps

within his body separating his *hegemonikon* from its surrounding flesh, blood, and bones. Marcus is a soul/body complex with a unified corporeal structure that makes him a psychophysical whole. Yet, notwithstanding his objective unity as a living body, Marcus identifies his essence or his self with his governing part, i.e. the rational faculty of his soul. He does not, however, pretend to be a Buddhist, who could make himself impervious to sensations. Hence, he proposes various strategies for dealing with bodily experiences: he can say to himself, 'what is feeling this pain is not me, but my body'. Or, when the sensations become too strong to be sidelined in this way, he can say 'I should acknowledge my feelings to be quite natural experiences, but withhold from them any value judgment, and thus keep them isolated from my intellectual essence'.

Why should he do this? Why not, as an Epicurean would do, simply register the feelings as good or bad respectively? The answer is provided by the second passage just cited. In Marcus' philosophy of selfhood, you cannot have a *hegemonikon* deserving of the name, i.e. a genuinely governing self, if you allow your mind to be controlled by sensations and impulses that pertain to animal life quite generally, and thus fail to accord with your specifically human nature.

Marcus' limitation of his self to the soul's governing part is not simply an endorsement of standard Stoicism; it should also be seen as a reflection of his role as actual governor of the mighty Roman Empire. I have already cited passages that connect the *hegemonikon* with sociability and political involvement. Marcus recurs several times to his imperial position, as, for instance, when he reminds himself to act according to the 'rationale of ruling and law-giving' for the benefit of mankind (4.12). Were he to allow himself to become dominated by purely animal drives, like a conventional despot, he would be unable to play the social and political part that he takes himself to have been assigned.⁵

The passages we have already studied identify the self by abstracting it from other features of the human being. Marcus plays numerous variations on this theme and shifts between three-fold, two-fold, and single models of human identity. The three-fold model has many variations, but in essence it juxtaposes body, soul, and intellect or governing part (2.2, 3.16, 5.33, 7.16, 8.56, 12.3, 12.14; Gill (2007) 176–79). For body (*soma*), Marcus sometimes writes mere body (*somation*), flesh or mere flesh (*sarkidion*), and he may replace soul (*psyche*) with breath (*pneuma*) or mere breath (*pneumation*). These substitutions serve to disparage all parts or aspects of the person except the intellect or governing part. This negativity can be extreme, when he writes:

As one already dying, despise the flesh – gore, bones, the network of nerves, sinews, veins, and arteries. Consider the breath too, the sort of thing that it is –

wind, constantly changing, but all the time emitted and inhaled. The third thing, then, is the governing part. (2.2)

Taken in isolation, such a passage would make Marcus appear worryingly troubled by the physical realities that are an inevitable feature of a living body. In fact, the *Meditations* show that he also had a keen eye for natural beauty. His disparagement of the human body is more than a rhetorical ploy, but it is deliberately exaggerated in order to emphasize the distinctness of the essential self.

The two-fold model focuses on the contrast between body and intellect, dropping reference to the soul or vital breath. Marcus describes himself as an amalgam of the ‘causal’ and the ‘material’, a pairing that invokes the fundamental Stoic principles active ‘cause’ and passive ‘matter’ (5.13). He also contrasts his flesh with his intellect (*nous*; 7.66), or his *hegemonikon* with his flesh (12.2). Such apparent dualism has sometimes been regarded as a Platonic intrusion into the Stoic philosophy of the *Meditations*. Marcus does allude to Socrates in passages colored by the asceticism of the Platonic dialogue *Phaedo* (3.6, 3.7), but when he echoes the sharp contrasts found there between mind and body he does not literally import the incorporeal features of the Platonic *psyche*. Epictetus was Marcus’ immediate linguistic model in such contexts, and Epictetus accepted the physicality of the human soul (Long (2002) 158–62). Marcus was not a metaphysical dualist, but when he describes the soul’s governing part as a different kind of entity from its physiological covering, he means exactly what he says. In this way he is like a modern thinker who accepts the physicality of all events, but declines to reduce mental experiences and mental states to the neuro-physiological occurrences with which they are necessarily correlated.

For Marcus the three-fold and two-fold models are a foil for identifying the essence of the self with a unitary notion – the *hegemonikon* or intellect as such.⁶ The ethical implications of this view are set out in the following extraordinary excerpt:

You are composed of three things – mere body, mere breath, and intellect. Two of these are *yours* to the extent of your needing to take care of them, but the third alone is strictly *yours*. So if you separate from *yourself*, that is from your mind, everything other people say or do, or whatever you yourself have said or done, and whatever in the future troubles you, all that accrues to you involuntarily (*aproaireta*) from your bodily envelope or associated life-breath, and everything the external flux whirls around, so that your reflective mind, freed from its fated accompaniments (*synheimarmena*) lives purified and released *by itself*, doing what is right, accepting what occurs and speaking the truth – if, I say, you separate from this ruling part (*hegemonikon*) your emotional attachments (*prospatheia*) and the

events of the past or the future...and practice living only the life you *are* living, that is the present, you will be able to live out the rest up till your death untroubled and kindly and in harmony with your own divinity (*daimon*). (12.3)

Many difficult ideas clamor for comment here. These ideas include detachment not simply from one's bodily frame and metabolism, but detachment from one's entire social milieu, one's own past acts and words, one's concerns about the future – in short, Marcus recommends himself to focus wholly on the present moment, stressing, as he frequently does, that the present is all that one has. Very well, we may say. But what could such a self be, detached from memory and anticipation? The desirable outcome, he proposes, is 'doing what is right, welcoming all that occurs, and speaking the truth'. Could anyone practice that regimen in complete detachment from their spatio-temporal context? How can persons be anything at all in abstraction from their history? Supposing that to be possible, would it not be an abandonment of oneself? Marcus' exhortation to sever his governing part from all the rest of him reads like a policy of self-cancelling. Tempting, though it is, to find this (by no means unique) passage too highly rhetorical to be fully coherent, I want to probe into it more deeply.

What I take Marcus, most basically, to be recommending to himself, is expressed by Epictetus in 'the divine law' (*Discourses* 2.26.28): guarding one's own, using only what one is given, not getting emotionally involved (*prospaschein*) with anything else, whether companions, places, or even one's own body. Expressed in this way, Marcus' regimen is the standard Stoic doctrine that the key to genuine self-realization for ourselves as rational minds is not the world's impingement on us, but our outlook on the world, 'how one thinks about everything', or 'all is thinking', as he characterizes his essential philosophy of life in the expression *pan hypolepsis* (2.15; cf. 12.8, 12.22). However, this version of his regimen makes it tractable at the cost of deflating its distinctness. Marcus' model of the self requires his own language, hyperbolic though it is in the long passage above, in order for its strangeness and interest to be appreciated. His recommended detachment from time, space, associates, even his own history, highlights the self as an autonomous subject of consciousness, a fixed internal point of refuge in an outer context of flux and confusion. With an intensely personal, almost desperate, plea, he seeks to give himself a renewed future, a purification as it were, a shedding of the past, merging his subjective consciousness with the ideal rationality that he calls his own divinity (*daimon*).

Before turning to that concept, divinity, let us note that Marcus' recommended detachment is not confined to his body and external situation. It may also extend to the basic faculties of the *hegemonikon*, as emerges most starkly in these passages:

Erase your impression (*phantasia*), stop your impulse (*horme*), quench your desire (*orexis*); restrict the governing part to its own power. (9.7)

Erase your impressions by continually telling yourself: it is up to me to have no faultiness in my soul, no longing or any disturbance at all, but focusing on what everything is really like, I treat everything according to its worth. Be mindful of your having this power thanks to Nature. (8.29)

What Marcus, following standard Stoic terminology, calls impression impulse and desire are basic faculties of the mind or governing part. Impression (*phantasia*) covers all thought contents, whether mediated by the senses or emerging into consciousness through memory, imagination, or abstract reasoning. Impulse and desire are the mind's motivating faculties, and range over emotion, wanting, avoiding, and the like. Epictetus, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, identifies the good life with making correct use of one's impressions and motivating oneself accordingly. This is a Stoic formula for the rational life that human beings are divinely qualified to lead.

Marcus entirely agrees with this regimen. But in his therapeutic exercises he sometimes tells himself to 'contract' into a mental space that, for the moment, excludes all thought and desire (7.28, 29). We may best understand this contraction as a recommendation to concentrate as intensely as possible on the mind's identity as a faculty of judgment, untrammelled by this or that particular impression or impulse. In normal consciousness, a mind will always have some impression as its thought content and some inclination or aversion arising from its impressions. As Marcus says: 'Your mind will be just like the sequence of your impressions' (5.16). But, to the introspective emperor, this experience always carries the risk of acting precipitately, assenting to impressions without carefully reviewing them, and reacting like a puppet that is jerked about by the strings of its manipulator (see Berryman (2010)). In telling himself to suspend normal mental processes, Marcus seeks to direct his focus exclusively on his capacity for rational reflection, or what he likes to call the self's internal divinity, an offshoot of the divinely governed cosmos.

3. Internal Divinity and Offshoot of the Cosmos

By abstracting from his body and surroundings, focusing only on the present, Marcus assures himself that he will be able to live in harmony with his own divinity (*daimon*). What does this notion contribute to the emperor's understanding of *the* self in general and his own self in particular? To approach this large question, we need some background.

The idea that human beings contain divinity in virtue of having a rational mind is common to Plato, Aristotle, and Stoicism. *Daimon* is a term that can

signify either divine power at the highest level or something lesser, a demigod or spirit; and it can also refer to a person's lot or individual fate. Hence *eudaimonia*, conventionally translated 'happiness', is literally a divinely favored condition or a good dispensation. In archaic Greece rationality was not a divine attribute, but Zeus, the supreme god, was always taken to have a far-seeing and world-governing intellect (*nous*). As the philosophers developed ideas concerning reason, divinity lost its physical resemblance to humanity but acquired super-human rationality instead. In this way Nature's causality, goodness, perfect reason, and divinity came to be regarded as mutually entailing concepts. It is thus not too difficult to see why philosophers, starting with Plato, referred to the best human life as likeness to god.

In Plato and Aristotle, who take the soul to be incorporeal, divinity lacks a body, but Stoicism introduces a pantheistic conception of the world, according to which god is embodied in the form of fiery breath (*pneuma*), acting as the immanent cause of all natural events (Long (2002) 143–48). As I indicated in the axioms accepted by Marcus, Stoics envisioned the life principle or soul as an 'offshoot' of the omnipresent divinity, with the human soul having the potentiality to acquire rationality in its own right, so to speak, from its divine source. Seneca (*Epistle to Lucilius* 41) and Epictetus (1.14, 2.8) speak of human beings possessing 'a god within', in reference to the intellect or governing part, and we can be sure that this locution was characteristic of the school. But Marcus uses it far more frequently than any other Stoic author. He was probably encouraged to do so by the related Roman concept of *genius*, meaning the divine spirit of a family (*gens*) that was supposedly inborn in each family member and acted as that person's supernatural guardian (Farquharson (1944) vol. 2, 529). In origin this familial idea of a guardian spirit had nothing to do with divine rationality, but in Marcus' use of the term *daimon*, the traditional Roman notion of a divine aspect to the self has been conflated with the special Stoic notion of one's divine rational essence.

Here is a representative selection of relevant passages:

It is the mark of the good man to accept and welcome the events and things fated for him, and not to pollute the *divinity seated in his chest* and disturb it with a throng of impressions, but to watch over it graciously, harmoniously following God, saying nothing false and doing nothing wrong. (3.16)

'Live with the gods.' One lives with the gods who continually displays his own soul to them as content with its dispensations, and executing the will of the *divinity*, given by Zeus to each person as guardian and leader (*hegemon*), and offshoot (*apospasma*) of himself. This *divinity* is each person's intellect and reason. (5.27)

All the things of the body, a river; of the soul, a dream and delusion; life, a war and foreign residence; posthumous fame, oblivion. So what is able to escort us? One

thing only, philosophy. That means keeping the *internal divinity* inviolate and unharmed, mastering pleasures and pains, and doing nothing randomly or falsely or with pretence. (2.17)

We have encountered many of these ideas already – accepting fate, resisting impressions and sensations, keeping a pure consciousness, integrity of word and deed, and internal security to counter the instability of everything external to the self. Some things in these passages, however, have come up for the first time, such as exhibiting one's soul to the gods. This striking expression should warn us against treating Marcus' internal divinity as simply a highly charged reference to his mind or reason, though he often does apply these prosaic words to his self. Everybody agrees that human beings have a mind and rational capacity, but it is hardly normal to think that these properties have anything divine about them; and if they do, what might that mean?

In other passages, as we have seen, Marcus identifies himself with his mind as distinct from his body and his life-breath. But if his 'I' or self were simply identical to his internal divinity with no qualification, it would hardly make sense for him to speak of the latter as his guardian or of his needing to cultivate it and keep it unharmed.

Three responses suggest themselves. First, any concept of selfhood presupposes reflexivity. I am not two things, an 'I' and a self: being or having a self presupposes an ability to detach one's identity, oneself, from one's subjectivity as thinker or speaker. Hence we are all able, like Marcus, to address, berate, and encourage ourselves without becoming bifurcated.

But this elementary linguistic fact is insufficient for our present purpose. Marcus is not writing a diary. He is constantly confronting the 'I' or 'you' of his present consciousness with an ideal self that is he or you, as he would like them to be, or as he thinks that they ought to be. This ideal self has much in common with what we might call conscience, a mind that is completely pure and undistracted, perfected rationality as Stoics would call it. Such an analysis can account for Marcus' treating the ideal self as a guardian, but it does not do justice to his full-blown religious language – 'the divinity seated in his chest', which requires to be kept inviolate.

The third dimension beyond reflexivity and ideal selfhood takes us into the remarkable cluster of ideas comprised by Stoic pantheism, providence, and fate. When Marcus and Epictetus enjoin cultivation of the internal divinity, they are not treating this aspect of selfhood as a unique peculiarity along the lines of Socrates' notorious divine sign (*daimonion*), which intermittently told him not to do something he was contemplating. All human beings according to Marcus have an intellect (*nous*) that is God (*theos*) – an emanation from universal Nature, which is the source of everyone's soul (12.26). Epictetus similarly says: 'You are carrying God around, you poor thing, and you don't know it'

(2.8.12). The question we need to ask, then, is how this curious amalgam of psychology and theology relates to Marcus' ethical injunctions – to be just and truthful, to cooperate with fellow human beings while also withdrawing into the private sanctum of a mind sealed off from everything else including his own natural motions.

The passage containing his remarks about everyone's divine intellect (12.6) surrounds that statement with a series of other 'reminders'. First, the world's nature is such that everything happening now has always happened and will always happen. Second, human beings are akin to one another not physiologically but mentally, which implies that the human community is potentially a community of minds. Third, everything we might deem to be our own property – children, body, and soul – is Nature's products. Fourth, everything is what we judge it to be. Fifth, and last, all that anyone ever lives and loses is the present moment.

These propositions give Marcus two complementary perspectives on the self. One of these, which we may call objective (or a view from nowhere) seems to reduce individual persons to brief phases in the life of the universe.⁷ Because our bodies and our minds are made up of material that is constantly recycled, this is a perspective that views our selves as mere moments in the cosmic flux, endlessly repeatable and ultimately forgettable. Under this point of view, an individual mind, far from appearing self-possessed or something in its own right, is on loan, as it were, from its pantheistic source: we are not the sole and final authors of our thoughts and feelings since these are, ultimately, the way the world's universal reason is distributing and particularizing itself. This objective perspective underwrites Marcus' constant refrains concerning tolerance of other people, the indifference of suffering, disappointment and prospect of death, the essential sameness of everything, the merging of himself in the cosmic whole.

The other perspective is represented in his equally repeated reminder that everything is what the mind judges it to be with the governing part 'adapting and making itself whatever it likes, and making every event appear to itself however it likes' (6.8). That reads like an acknowledgment of extreme subjectivism, experientially speaking. The way things appear to us is how they are for us. Marcus does not and could not mean that there are no facts or truths or objective values. He can, and I think does, mean that the world we live in is a world irreducibly mediated by the way we, as individuals, think and by the concepts (true or false) that shape our individual minds.⁸

Another way to review the two perspectives is to think of them in terms of outer and inner. When Marcus reflects on the course of events, on human history, and on the cycle of life from birth to death, he is inclined to view the self and himself in an externalist and deflationary way. But when he focuses inwardly on what he calls 'the properties of the rational soul, its capacity to

see itself, articulate itself and make itself into whatever it wants' (11.1), he treats his subjective identity as if he himself is the ultimate subject – no mere part of cosmic Nature but fully consonant with it. Either way, he speaks with the voice of his internal divinity.

4. Autonomy and Partnership with the Whole

At this point I need to address the two points of apparent tension I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter: the compatibility of fate and autonomy, and the coherence of the part/whole relation existing between individual human natures and universal Nature.

Marcus repeatedly insists that his nature, as a rational being, equips him to be autonomous, meaning never subject to the will or power of anything outside himself (5.10, 34; 7.54, 68; 8.47, 9.32). A human *hegemonikon* has 'its own authority' (8.56), and cannot be prevented from living according to its inherently rational nature (6.58). This autonomy, grand though it sounds, has limitations that are best explained in his own words (8.32):

You should construct your life, one action at a time, and be content if each action fulfils itself as far as possible; no one at all can prevent you from that achievement. 'Some external obstacle will be in the way.' But none to stop you from acting justly, moderately and sensibly. 'Perhaps something else will be prevented from occurring.' But by contentedly facing that impediment and sensibly adapting to the circumstance you will immediately have another action that will fit into your life plan.

Just like Epictetus, Marcus limits unrestricted freedom of action to the internal attitude one can adopt, thanks to one's God-given rationality, to circumstances, motivations, and moral disposition. Does he take himself in this regard to fall outside Nature's causality, the chains of fate? By no means:

Bear in mind the whole of substance, in which you participate to a tiny extent, the whole of time, of which a tiny hair's breadth has been assigned to you, and the fate of which you are a minute part. (5.24)

Another person errs. How does that concern me? He will deal with that; he has his own disposition and activity. I at this moment have what universal Nature wants me to have, and I do what my own nature wants me to do. (5.25)

Universal Nature comprises all particular natures; its causal sequence governs everything. By comparison, from that objective perspective, the self is a miniscule and pathetically temporary thing. None the less, the self's

co-substantiality with universal Nature dignifies it hugely, by bestowing on it a share of the world's reason (the internal *daimon*) and thus a potentially self-determined mentality. Selves that allow their animal nature and unreflective minds to govern their lives abrogate that autonomy. By contrast a reflective mind's inherence in Nature, and its understanding of Nature, give it subjective autonomy. Such a self knows itself to be 'a minute part of fate', and so an integral part of Nature's causal chain. Because that chain determines everything outside the self's reflective powers and rational motivations, a self with Marcus' philosophy recognizes both fate and providence in all Nature's activities. It would be irrational and impious for such a self to want external events to be otherwise than they turn out to be (Long (1971) 191; Frede (2011) 79–80). By identifying his self with his internal *daimon*, Marcus integrates his subjective identity with his objective participation in Nature's causal chain.

Under these Stoic perspectives free will requires determinism and the free human being requires to see himself as a part of the cosmic universe whole. If it is fully up to you to will what happens as it happens, as Marcus tells himself, you had better believe in providential determinism. Otherwise, given all the bad things that happen, it would be irrational not to want the world to be different from the way it is. As for part and whole, a non-Stoic might completely reject Marcus' commitment to seeing himself as an integral member of the whole, a citizen of the world. But if you think, as he does, that the possession of reason unites all human beings into a community of selves who are partnered by the omnipresent God or Nature, there is nowhere else to go. To be the rational agent that you are, in Marcus' view, requires your cosmopolitan community participation.

5. Conclusion

Marcus' *Meditations* are grounded in the study and practice of Stoicism, but their interest goes far beyond these acknowledged antecedents. The emperor was not an original theorist, but thanks to the intensity of his inward focus and his genius as a writer the *Meditations* are as great a contribution to the literature on selfhood as the work of such authors as Augustine, Pascal, and Kierkegaard. Within the ancient tradition, Marcus may be seen as the culmination of the Socratic injunction to live an examined life (3.6). Once his work became widely available in the 17th century, its influence, or at least related ideas, become diffuse. The Kantian notion of rational autonomy is one major instance of this diffusion. Comparison can also be made between Marcus' distinction between his embodied mentality and internal divinity, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, Kant's distinction between the empirical self and the transcendent

ego (*Critique of Pure Reason*, ‘Third Antinomy’).⁹ We may find echoes of Marcus’ effusive descriptions of Nature and Nature’s inner voice in Rousseau and German Romanticism (Taylor (1989) chs. 20–21). In our modern attempts to find appropriate language and concepts for our embodied selfhood, the *Meditations* should acquire renewed relevance.

NOTES

1. The translations of Marcus Aurelius in this chapter are entirely my own.
2. Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.1.10–12. I use the translation I made in Long (2002) 160. Zeus is a name the Stoics, including Marcus, frequently apply to universal Nature.
3. For detailed discussion of the Stoic concept of normative selfhood, see Long (2006) 365–69.
4. Long (1999) treats the fundamental doctrines of Stoic psychology.
5. In light of Epictetus’ influence on Marcus’ thought and vocabulary, it is worth noting that the emperor never uses *prohairesis* (volition or choice), Epictetus’ favorite term to refer to the self.
6. Compare Epictetus 4.34: ‘Who am I? Not a mere body, nor a piece of property, nor a name. None of these. What then? I am a rational creature.’
7. Hadot ((1995) ch. 9) calls this perspective ‘the view from above’, and Annas ((1993) 161) ‘the point of view of the universe’. See also Long (2002) 205.
8. The relevance of subjectivity and individualism to late Stoic conceptions of the person is highly controversial. Those who find it strongly present include Long ((1996) and (2006)) and Sorabji ((2006) ch. 8); on the other side see Gill ((2006) ch. 6.5) and Inwood ((2005) ch. 12).
9. See also Long (1996) 282. There, in the case of Epictetus, I reject the idea of a noumenal self or observer, detachable from all experience. Marcus, however, seems to play with this idea in his recommendations to contract into his governing part.

FURTHER READING

For general orientation on the concept of the self see Taylor (1989) and Seigel (2005). Major stimulus to studying Greek and Roman thought on the self has been provided by the French scholars Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot: see Foucault (2005) and Hadot (1995). Ancient treatments of selfhood, including Stoic contributions in general (but not Marcus Aurelius specifically) include Gill (2006), Sorabji (2006), and Bartsch (2006). For interpretation of the Stoic ideas most pertinent to the concept of the self, see Annas (1992); and Long (1999). Aspects of the Stoic philosophy of selfhood are discussed in Inwood (2005), Reydam-Schils (2005), and Long (1996), (2002), and (2006).

On Marcus Aurelius, specifically, the best introduction is Hadot (1998). Berryman (2010) is a detailed study of how and why Marcus Aurelius uses the image of the puppet in his reflections on the self.

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PART VI

RECEPTION

CHAPTER 31

The Reception of the Philosopher-King in Antiquity and the Medieval Age

Julia Bruch and Katrin Herrmann

The Greek historian Cassius Dio recalls the reign of Marcus Aurelius in these words: ‘For our history now descends from a kingdom of gold to one of iron and rust, as affairs did for the Romans of that day’ (Dio 72.36.4). And earlier in his work he praises Marcus as an emperor who ‘ruled better than any others who had ever been in any position of power’ (Dio 72.34.2). Rosen has combined Dio’s account with Marcus Aurelius’ own considerations in the *Meditations* and comes to the conclusion that this emperor had been an ideal in demonstrating *civilitas* (civility) towards his people (Rosen (1996) 157–60). Herodian introduces his recollection of the Roman Empire after the Death of Marcus also by saying that this emperor should have set a pattern for all the future rulers (Herodian, *History of the Empire from the Death of Marcus* 2, 10, 3). Despite these quite affirmative obituaries by chronologically close authors, the reception of the rule and person of Marcus Aurelius has not been exclusively positive in antiquity and medieval times.

1. Pagan Historiography after the Death of Marcus Aurelius

Apart from the authors cited above, all historiographical sources on Marcus Aurelius date – with the exception of Zosimus – to the fourth century. But only the *Brevaria* of Aurelius Victor and Eutropius give a description of Marcus’ reign. The emperor is pictured as the ideal ruler in Aurelius Victor’s *Liber de*

Caesaribus (Christ (2005) 177–200). Being introduced as sole emperor after the death of his brother Lucius Verus, Aurelius Victor says it was rumored that Marcus himself poisoned the co-emperor because of jealousy (Aurelius Victor, *Liber de Caesaribus* 16.6–8). In the next paragraph, however, the author clarifies that he disagrees with this story, which could only be believed by men who are criminally twisted themselves. In his *Epitome de Caesaribus* Aurelius Victor describes his rule much less emotionally, although he does mention him as being an expert in Greek philosophy and literature (Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* 16.6). Eutropius' remarks on Marcus' reign do not differ very much from Aurelius Victor's. He introduces the philosopher-king as a *vir, quem mirari facilius quis quam laudare possit* (a man who is easier to be admired than to be praised; Eutropius, *Breviarium ab Urbe Condita* 8.11.1). Hadrian, his adoptive grandfather, admired Marcus Aurelius as an educated philosopher already as a child very much. Because of all his benefits and his *clementia* (clemency) towards the Roman Empire, Marcus' reign is classified as a time of happiness by the author (*Breviarium ab Urbe Condita* 8.14.2). When Eutropius in the 10th book of his compendium of Roman History describes the time of the emperor Julian he parallels him with Marcus Aurelius, mainly because he did his best to be like Marcus (*Breviarium ab Urbe Condita* 10.16.3). Eutropius is a reliable source for the above mentioned points, since he not only lived during the time of Julian's rule, but also attended his expedition against the Persians. When we turn to the last pagan historian in the fourth century, Ammianus Marcellinus, we are in the unfortunate situation that the first part of his *History* is lost and the remaining books only cover the years 353–378. Consequently, there is no account by Ammianus on Marcus Aurelius, but – as in the case of Eutropius – when the author comes to describe the time and reign of Julian, we do get an impression of how much he appreciated the philosopher-king. Julian is compared to Titus, Trajan, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius in a panegyric tradition. Ammianus praises Marcus in this context especially as an emperor being ideal in his actions and character (Ammianus Marcellinus, *History* 16.1.4). Judging the reign of Constantius, Ammianus states that he lacks one important virtue making him a good emperor. This he could have learned from Marcus Aurelius: *clementia* (clemency) (*History* 21.16.11). At the end of the work we find again a panegyric comparison between the emperor Valentinian on the one hand and Trajan and Marcus on the other (Kelly (2008) 306–10). As for the *Panegyrici Latini* (a collection of speeches in the praise of Roman emperors from the first to the fourth century), Marcus Aurelius is not mentioned but there are quite a few allusions to him. For example a passage in the Panegyric of Maximian (*Panegyric* 10.3.1) refers to the wise decision of dividing power. The ancient reader was well aware of Marcus Aurelius being the first to come up with the idea of sharing power.

Summing up, one can say that throughout the pagan historiography without exception Marcus Aurelius is considered as the ideal emperor because he had a philosophical education.

2. The *Historia Augusta*

The *Historia Augusta* plays an exceptional role on its own, because this collection of biographies plays an ambiguous part both in antiquity and modern scholarship (Johnes (2007) 25–34). It is presumably also to be dated to the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century, but by ancient standards it does not qualify as a traditional historiographical source, because it is a collection of biographies (Sonabend (2002) 214–21). The *vita* of Marcus Aurelius is the only one in the collection, which is not simply named after the emperor but also has an addition *vita Marci Antonini philosophi* (life of Marcus Antoninus the philosopher). More than that the early *vitae* (until the beginning of the third century) are to be considered as trustworthy and stand within the tradition of the biographies of Suetonius from the first century. Consisting of 29 chapters, the biography of Marcus Aurelius is unique amongst all the others not just because of its title but also because of its contents. The *vita* is divided into four parts, starting (chs. 1–7) with the family and the circumstances of Marcus' adoption by Antoninus Pius, his youth and life as *Caesar* (young emperor). The second part (chs. 8–16) deals with Marcus' time as *Augustus* together with his brother Lucius Verus as a co-emperor. But the author takes mainly the philosophers' side, considering him as a more suitable for the role as a ruler than his brother (e.g. 15.3). After the death of Lucius Verus Marcus' life as sole emperor is described (chs. 17–28). To a greater degree than in the preceding chapters, the biographer stresses that the main addition to Marcus' successful reign is his *clementia* (clemency), which in turn is rooted in his philosophy (e.g. 17.1). In the last chapter (ch. 29) of the *vita* one finds surprising accounts of the philosopher-emperor. Instead of a panegyric résumé such as at the end of Hadrian's and Antoninus Pius' *vitae* the author enumerates four accusations against him and, what is more, does not attempt to invalidate them. Modern scholars have engaged with this astonishing ending to the biography. Rosen draws the most plausible conclusions from it: Even as the very best of all emperors, Marcus is not the ideal and perfect ruler. In spite of his education he made mistakes (Rosen (1994) 189–96). Apart from the *vita* dedicated to himself, Marcus Aurelius is also mentioned in almost all the other biographies, although those of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius only refer to him in the context of his adoption (e.g. *HA Hadrian* 24.1), which is surprising when one considers how euphorically Hadrian is portrayed about his adoptive grandson in Marcus' *vita*. The

situation is different, however, when it comes to the lives of Lucius Verus and Avidius Cassius. Both biographies are to be seen as an extension of the already longest *vita* of the philosopher; it is stressed that Lucius Verus was trained by Marcus after his adoption yet never reached the same level and never really learned how to be a good emperor (e.g. *HA Lucius Verus* 2.10; 3.4 and 4.3). The last chapter of Lucius Verus' life presents anew the story that Marcus was supposed to have poisoned his brother, but here the author of the *Historia Augusta* takes a very clear side that also shows how much he admires Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher-king:

But it is wrong even to think of such a deed in connection with Marcus . . . nor shall we leave the matter undecided, but rather reject it discarded and disproved, since from the time of Marcus onward, with the exception of your Clemency, Diocletian Augustus, not even flattery, it seems, has been able to fashion such an emperor. (*HA Lucius Verus* 11.4)

Rosen considers Marcus Aurelius in his essays also as a paradigm and outstanding ruler (e.g. Rosen (1993)). Rosen has also discussed the relationship between Marcus Aurelius and his brother Lucius Verus. Very much like the author of the *Historia Augusta*, he comes to the conclusion that the two emperors have never been equitable rulers: Marcus Aurelius has always been the predominant figure in the empire (Rosen (1991) 282–85).

The name of Marcus Aurelius is used to differentiate between good and bad rulers in the biographies covering the lives of the third-century emperors, because only the good ones deserve in the view of the *Historia Augusta's* author really to name themselves after the philosopher. It all cumulates in a kind of foreword to the *vita* of Carus, Carinus, and Numerianus, where the author recalls all the emperors panegyrically:

Next, after enduring so many of the house of Nero, it reared its head again under Vespasian, and though having no joy from all the good fortune of Titus and bleeding from Domitian's brutality, it was happier than had been its wont under Nerva and Trajan and his successors as far as Marcus, but was sorely stricken by the madness and cruelty of Commodus Let us, rather, pass on to Carus, a mediocre man, so to speak, but one to be ranked with the good rather than the evil princes, yet a better ruler by far, had he not left Carinus to be his heir. (*HA Carus, Carinus and Numerianus* 3.3–8)

Even Carus, Carinus, and Numerianus, described in the final biography, were not successful as rulers, because as far as the author was concerned, Marcus Aurelius was succeeded by Diocletian, in terms of his capacity to excel as an emperor. All in all the *Historia Augusta* is not only a collection of second- and

third-century emperors, but also a praise of the ideal emperor, which is to the author, apart from Diocletian, mainly Marcus Aurelius.

3. Julian the Apostate and Marcus Aurelius

Emperor Julian, who ruled for three years from 361 to 363, tried to turn religious life back to the pagan cults, at a time when Christianity stood already on solid ground. Initially he was educated in a Christian way, but when he started his studies in Asia Minor, he became more and more convinced of the neoplatonic philosophy. Although he would have preferred to stay a *privatus* (keeping out of politics), in 355 he was announced *Caesar* and became sole-emperor a few years later. But in the meantime he was even more convinced by his philosophical studies and considered Christianity only as religion that lacked the right variety of gods (Bringmann (2008) 90–96). Shortly after his accession he composed the satire *Caesars*, in which he examined all the past emperors in the search of the best ruling principles. It takes place during the Saturnalia, where Romulus gave a feast and invited not only the gods, but the emperors as well (Julian, *Caesars* 307B). After the gods and emperors had entered and had been seated, Hermes proposed to examine the earthly rulers personally (*Caesars* 316A). When it came to Marcus' turn, he said:

It seems to me, O Zeus and ye other gods that I have no need to make a speech or to compete. If you did not know all that concerns me it would indeed be fitting for me to inform you. But since you know it and nothing at all is hidden from you, do you of your own accord assign me such honor as I deserve. (*Caesars* 328C)

In the second round Hermes addressed Marcus again:

And you, Verus, what did you think the noblest ambition in life? In a low voice he answered modestly, 'To imitate the gods'. This answer they at once agreed was highly noble and in fact the best possible. (*Caesars* 333C–D)

In the end it turned out that Marcus had won the challenge for Julian because of his philosophical principles, which also influenced him during his official functions. But Julian mentioned his opinion not only in a metaphorical way: in his correspondence we have literal accounts on his opinion of Marcus Aurelius, where he describes him as being exemplary:

I earnestly desire to fulfill your hopes of me even as you express them in your letter, but I am afraid I shall fall short of them, since the expectations you have

raised both in the minds of others, and still more in your own, are beyond my powers. There was a time when I believed that I ought to try to rival men who have been most distinguished for excellence, Alexander for instance or Marcus. (Julian, *Letter to Themistius the Philosopher* 253A)

The cited letter was addressed to Themistius, who lived at the time of Julian and was a philosopher rather than a Christian. His orations show what has changed in the representation of an emperor since Marcus Aurelius. The most important of all virtues according to him is philanthropy, which is the only thing that guarantees the Kingdom of Heaven. Themistius did not expect his emperor to be a philosopher-king in the sense of Marcus, but to Julian this was his greatest aim (Themistius, *The Private Orations of Themistius* 1.4a–6b, 1.8a–c, 11.146c–147b; Kolb (2001) 129–30). Needless to say that they were not always on good terms.

However, the relationship between Marcus Aurelius and Julian has another aspect. Ammianus Marcellinus and Eutropius were both contemporaries of Julian and had first-hand knowledge of the emperor. As Julian's admiration for the philosopher-emperor was well known, 'it has become axiomatic to link Julian's name specifically with that of Marcus Aurelius' (Hunt (1995) 287). One example is the passage from Ammianus Marcellinus (21.16.11) cited above. In this passage the historian defends Julian against possible criticism without ever mentioning his name. Ammianus' method of praising Julian is usually to damn Constantius II – typically linked with actions of Marcus Aurelius (Kelly (2005) 415–16).

4. The Christian Literature on Marcus Aurelius

The Christian literature is the most ambiguous group. Because Christianity developed immensely in the second century, it is understandable that Marcus' actions towards this religious group influenced gradually its literary and historiographical output (Birley (2000) 256–65). The first was Tertullian, who was not only a contemporary of Marcus Aurelius, but also strongly influenced by the Second Sophistic. His *Apology*, which was probably written around 197, is composed as a speech in front of the court. Its aim is to convince the pagan citizens of the Roman empire of the trustworthiness of the Christians. But at the same time he attacks the pagan cults and appeals for further persecution of the Christians: 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church' (Tertullian, *Apology* 50.13). Despite the content of his work he was not as strictly opposed to Marcus Aurelius as later Christian authors were. On the contrary Marcus is even called a *protector* (guardian) of Christianity, because during the Marcomannic Wars, when he and his soldiers were close to dying of

thirst, a few Christians among the soldiers prayed, and it started raining, which saved the troops. Therefore, Tertullian concludes that the emperor must have been grateful to the Christians (*Apology* 5.6). Another Christian author of the second century was rather unknown in antiquity, but he was also a contemporary of Marcus Aurelius and addressed his work *Embassy* to him and his son Commodus (Barnard (1972) 13f.). It was a very carefully written plea for justice for the Christians, expressed by a philosopher to another philosopher (Barnard (1972) 19–25). He treats the emperor with great respect, as the opening shows:

In your empire, greatest of sovereigns, different nations have different customs and laws; and no one is hindered by law or fear of punishment from following his ancestral usages, however ridiculous these may be. (Athenagoras, *Embassy* 1.1)

Eusebius, who lived more than a hundred years later under the reign of Constantine the Great, was completely indoctrinated by these times and the persecutions of Christians. In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Marcus Aurelius is turned into a persecutor of Christianity, because of the martyrdom of Polycarp. He was probably executed by the Romans in 155 and according to Eusebius it was Marcus' responsibility. But all the chapters dealing with this martyrdom (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.12–15) show that Eusebius had a problem with distinguishing between Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. Therefore he thought that the execution took place in the times of Marcus Antoninus as emperor, instead of Antoninus Pius. This episode shows clearly that Eusebius was not aiming to find historical truth, but to trace back the persecutors of Christianity. But as a result of the confusion, Marcus Aurelius was henceforth considered a persecutor, which was imposed on him by Christian tradition and led to the fact that he was hardly recognized in medieval times. Augustine is the most famous example of someone who trusted Eusebius' interpretation. In the *City of God*, where he enumerates the 10 persecutions until the time of the Antichrist, Marcus Aurelius is counted as the fourth persecutor between Trajan and Septimius Severus (Augustine, *The City of God* 18.52). This is probably the reason why Marcus Aurelius is not even mentioned when Augustine discusses the several philosophical trends in the past of the Roman Empire (*The City of God* 9.4 and 5). Other Christian authors such as Epiphanius from Salamis or Clemens from Alexandria mention Marcus Aurelius only in the context of enumerating all emperors who have ruled since the birth of Christ. Ororsius, who lived at the turn of the fourth to the fifth century, was a priest. His most famous piece of work *Historiarum adversum Paganos* was motivated and inspired by Augustine. It not surprising, though, that he treats only topics specific to Christianity, too. He mentions the persecutions during the time of Marcus Aurelius' and Lucius Verus' Parthian

War, emphasizing that this is already the fourth time since the reign of Emperor Nero (Orosius, *History* 7.15.4). A few paragraphs later he describes the Rain Miracle during the Marcomannic Wars. Not only does Orosius mention the rescuing prayers of the Christians but he also claims that the enemies were struck by God's lightning (*History* 7.15.8–9). By the time of Orosius, the positive spin, so clearly connected with Tertullian's version of the story, had been completely lost. The picture that remains of Marcus Aurelius is that of a persecutor.

5. The Image of Marcus Aurelius in Medieval Texts

The question of the image of Marcus Aurelius in medieval texts seems quite difficult to answer. Did medieval scholars consider Marcus Aurelius as a philosopher-king and a good emperor as well as a good politician, like in the late antiquity, or did they judge him differently?

Not surprisingly, most medieval writers judge emperors of the ancient world via reference to their religion. The main question they asked was: Were they good Christians? And if the emperor was not a Christian, how did he treat the Christians in his empire? Constantine the Great, for example, has been regarded by medieval writers as the best emperor of the ancient world. As a result, the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius was misinterpreted during the Middle Ages as an image of Constantine. This statue symbolized the epitome of a *miles christianus* in the Christian occident (Knauer (1979) 308). But how did individual medieval writers judge Marcus Aurelius? Let's have a look at the sources.

5.1. *The Medieval Annalists and Chroniclers*

Medieval chroniclers and annalists often begin their texts with the genesis of the world. These writers show us their image of Roman history and its emperors. The notes of the emperors of the ancient world are often comparatively short and seldom elaborate. Since most medieval writers were monks or clerics, the texts reflect their Christian education. This fact has to be taken into account while reading these texts. Another important prerequisite for understanding their view of the emperor is to know their references. Here, the most important sources for the medieval writers seem to be Eutropius, Eusebius, and Orosius.

The opus of Marcus Aurelius had been written in Greek and was not received in the Christian occident. The *Meditations* survived in Byzantium. Thus, interest in this book was not aroused before the Enlightenment (Capelle (1953) LV–VII).

Consequently, a survey of the image of Marcus Aurelius' governance in the Middle Ages has to remain vague. This question has not yet been explored in medieval history. I intend to give a representative overview of the sources as a basis to answer the question.

Here, the most important and representative examples for medieval annalists and chroniclers are chosen from a wide range of texts.

The Christian author Cassiodor (died about 580) can be named as an example for the intersection between the texts of the ancient world and medieval works. In his historical writings starting with Adam and Eve, the author gives an abstract of Roman history. His main sources are Jerome and Aurelius Victor. Cassiodor emphasizes that the Parthian War was an important occasion during the government of Marcus Aurelius, who is not evaluated in this work (*Cassiodori Senatoris chronica* 823–45).

Another author who mentioned Marcus Aurelius is Jordanes (died about 552). Among other things, he wrote a History of Rome (*historica Romana*) composed as a chronicle beginning with the creation of the world and ending with the governance of Emperor Justinian. His main sources are Eutropius and Jerome. In the text Marcus Aurelius is mentioned as an emperor along with his brother. Furthermore, Jordanes only pointed out the Parthian War (*Romana* 272). Hence, we can see that medieval writers do not emphasize the image of the emperor. In relation to the size of the work they mention merely the name of Marcus Aurelius, the date of his government, the major events (like the Parthian War) as well as the important arrangements (the ruling with his brother).

Besides the Parthian War as a major event, the majority of the Christian authors note the persecutions of Christians, which were attributed to the governance of Marcus Aurelius. During these persecutions, Polycarp of Smyrna, one of the most important martyrs of Christian history, was executed. Beside his famous *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (The Ecclesiastical History of the English People) the Venerable Bede (died 735), 'the father of English history', wrote a book about calendrical purposes and the historical events from the beginning of the Earth. This book is called *De temporum ratione* (On the Reckoning of Time). Bede describes the governance of Marcus Aurelius referring to Jerome and Orosius. He stresses the following events: 'Persecutione orta in Asia Polycarpus et Pionus fecere martyrium in Gallia quoque plurimi gloriose pro Christi sanguinem fudere' ('During the persecution that occurred in Asia, Polycarp and Pionius suffered martyrdom: also in Gaul many people gloriously shed their blood for Christ') (Bede, *Chronica* 327). Bede is the first among the medieval writers analyzed here who mentioned the persecution of Christians in Asia; other authors followed soon. Regino, abbot of the Benedictine monastery Prüm (died 915), provides more detailed information concerning the martyrs: 'coronati sunt Romae Anicetus

papa, Victor papa, Simetrius presbyter, Felicitas cum 7 filiis . . . apud Smyrna, Policarpus episcopus discipulus sancti Iohannis' ('In Rome were crowned with martyrdom pope Anicetus, pope Victor, Simetrius the presbyter, Felicitas together with her seven sons. . . in Smyrna, Polycarp bishop and scholar of St. John'). Regino gave the name of 32 martyrs which had been executed during the government of Marcus Aurelius (the author gave the wrong date of the beginning of the governance of Marcus Aurelius with the year 125) (*Reginonis Chronicon* 545.38–56).

Ekkehard, abbot of the Benedictine monastery Aura (died after the year 1125), wrote an extensive work, the *Chronicon universale* (World Chronicle), where he provided details about the life of Marcus Aurelius and his government. He concluded: without Marcus Aurelius the glory of Rome had been vanished ('sine dubio gloria Romana perisset'). He mentioned the character of Marcus Aurelius, but he also described persecutions of Christians (*Ekkehardi Uraugiensis Chronica universale* 105.20–48).

Magnus of Reichersberg, chronicler and monk in a monastery of the Augustinian Canons (died 1195) classified the persecution of Christians under the governance of Marcus Aurelius as the fourth big persecution in the Roman Empire. The other three persecutions are related to the governance of Nero, Domitian, and Trajan. Many Christians took the crown of martyrdom under the domination of Marcus Aurelius according to Magnus (*Chronica collecta a Magno presbytero* 163).

Otto of Freising (died 1158), Cistercian monk, bishop, and biographer of Frederick I Barbarossa, wrote a historical and philosophical book, named *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus* (Chronicle or History of the Two Cities). In his description of the rule of Marcus Aurelius the author also mentioned the Parthian war and persecutions of Christians. Otto described the martyrdom of Polycarp in great detail and he is the first author who blames Marcus Aurelius for the persecutions: 'Antonini, qui quartus a Nerone persecutionem in christianos movit' ('Antoninus, who was the fourth since Nero who order the persecution of Christians'). The other authors more generally stated that the persecutions were under the governance of Marcus Aurelius not naming any person as guilty. In contrast to this, Otto also was the first who described the Rain Miracle and assigned it to a Christian context (Ottonis Episcopi Frisingensis, *Chronicon*, liber 3.24).

Hugh, abbot of the Benedictine monastery Flavigny (died about 1114), who wrote a Latin world chronicle from the Birth of Jesus until his own time, is an example of a medieval French chronicler. The first world chronicle written in Italy was created by Sicard of Cremona (died 1215). Hugh and Sicard also emphasize the persecutions under the governance of Marcus Aurelius (*Chronicon Hugonis monachi Viridunensis et Divionensis, abbatis Flaviniacensis*, liber 1.296.31–40 and *Sicardi episcopi Cremonensis Cronica* 110.18–111.3).

The first universal chronicle written in German came into existence about 1229. The work was continued until the 15th century. Here, Marcus Aurelius is described as

en edele man van alden Romeren. Dese hadde alle dogede unde was en bescermere aller armen, unde of he nicht ne ware keiser worden, Romisch ere were an den tiden verdorven [a noble man among the ancient Romans. He had all virtues and was a guardian of the poor, and had he not become emperor, the Roman glory would have perished at this time]

In spite of this praise, the author mentioned the fourth big persecution of Christians (*Sächsische Weltchronik* 52).

The last work at this time is the Annals of Magdeburg (*Annales Magdeburgenses*) from the middle of the 15th century. The annals describe Marcus Aurelius and his time in nearly the same way as the statement of Ekkehard of Aura (*Annales Magdeburgenses* 113.16–46).

The image of Marcus Aurelius during the European Middle Ages remained nearly constant: he was regarded as an emperor of the ancient world who won an important war against the Parthians and under whose governance persecutions of Christians took place. Only a few authors have given more detail. In addition, the *Sächsische Weltchronik* (Saxon world chronicle) took the knowledge about this theme from Ekkehard of Aura.

5.2. The Medieval Philosopher

Another group of medieval writers are producers of philosophical works. The scholastic philosopher John of Salisbury is a good example of this. In his work *Policraticus* John mentioned Marcus Aurelius in book 8, chapter 19, with the heading ‘de morte Iulii Cesaris et aliorum gentilium tyrannorum’ (Of the death of Julius Caesar and other pagan tyrants). John’s *Policraticus* ‘is commonly acclaimed as the first extended work of political theory written during the Latin Middle Ages’ (Nederman (1990) XV). But the work is more than a book about political theory. ‘It is equally a work of moral theology, satire, speculative philosophy, legal procedure, self-consolation, biblical commentary and deeply personal meditation’ (Nederman (1990) XV). The *Policraticus* is classified as a philosophical instruction to kings and other rulers (*Fürstenspiegel*/mirror of princes), but it is even more than this. The most important and best received part of the work is the discussion of tyranny. John distinguishes between private tyrant, public tyrant, and ecclesiastical tyrant. He also legitimates the killing of tyrannical rulers as a last resort (Nederman (1990) XXIV–V).

John tries to demonstrate that all tyrants find cruel ends, giving the examples of Sueton, Eutrop, and mainly Orosius: the Julio-Claudian dynasty (Caesar,

Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero); Vitellius, one of the emperor of the Year of the Four Emperors; from the Flavian dynasty, Domitian; from the Five Good Emperors Nerva; Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Commodus, as well as Septimius Severus (Kerner (1977) 196–97). Concerning Marcus Aurelius, John's sources are Eutrop and Orosius.

Marcus Antoninus Verus successor Pii cum Aurelio Comodo fratre suscepit imperium. Aurelius autem casu morbi, quem Graeci apoplexiam uocant, suffocatus interiit; eoque defuncto frater solus rei publicae praefuit, uir quem admirari quam laudare, si Eutropio creditur, facilius est. A principio uitae tranquillus et constans adeo ut ab infantia uultum nec gaudio nec merore mutauerit, philosophiam edoctus Stoice eisque deditus, uita pariter et eruditione philosophus, institutus est ad philosophiam per Apollonium Calcedonium, ad scientiam litterarum Grecarum per Cheronensem Plutarchi nepotem, Latinas autem eum Fronto nobilissimus orator docuit et pro quorundam opinione Plutarchi nepos [Marcus Antoninus Verus, successor of Pius, assumes the command together with his brother Aurelius Commodus. Aurelius however dies as a result of the illness, which the Greek called apoplexia, by suffocation; and after his death his brother alone governs the Res Publica; a man, who is easy to admire as well as to praise, if we can trust Eutrop. From the Beginning of his life calm and consistent, so much, that since his childhood his countenance does not chance neither of pleasure nor of sorrow; he was taught in the Philosophie called Stoa and devoted; he was through his way of life as well as his education a Philosopher; educated in Philosophy by Apollonius Calcedonis, in science of Greek literature by Cheronessa, a nephew of Plutarch, Latin he was taught by Fronto, the most famous orator]. (Ioannis Saresberiensis episcopi carnotensis, *Policratici* 8.19.791d–792a)

John mentions the Stoic education and he indirectly describes Marcus Aurelius as a good emperor, but with the limitation: 'if we can trust Eutrop'. He stressed the importance of the Parthian War and brings up the theme of the persecution. The description of Marcus Aurelius is added in the chapter about the tyrants.

Hence, we can conclude that in the Middle Ages Marcus Aurelius is not described as a good emperor and a philosopher-king; he is evaluated by the persecutions of Christians.

During the Renaissance (15th century) more scholars became interested in the ancient world. Consequently, the criterion of the correct religion became less important. Niccolò Machiavelli, for example, evaluates Marcus Aurelius with other criteria. Machiavelli had a theory that all emperors, who live a frugal life, love justice, and hate cruelty, end tragically. As examples of this theory, Machiavelli took historical emperors. Marcus Aurelius does not fit into this thought, he did not end tragically. So Machiavelli has to explain why (Machiavelli, *Il Principe* 149–51). It is important to notice that Machiavelli uses new

reference points to judge emperors of the ancient world, compared to those used in the Middle Ages. Machiavelli shows us the new image of Marcus Aurelius in the early modern ages.

FURTHER READING

The reception of Marcus Aurelius as philosopher-king, good emperor, and politician has not yet been discussed by scholars in its entirety. During the reign of the emperor Julian, Marcus Aurelius has become an ideal in all the above-mentioned fields. On the references the most recent works on this are the book by Schäfer (2008) and the contributions of Hunt (1995) and Kelly (2005). In the Middle Ages reception of Marcus Aurelius was extremely rare, but climaxed in the work of John of Salisbury. This is in the biography covered by Nederman (1990) and Kerner (1977).

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CHAPTER 32

The Sanctification of Marcus Aurelius

*Amy Richlin**

For all things fade and soon turn into a story; and soon utter oblivion has buried them.

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 4.33

After all, as Marcus points out, after death everyone turns into a story, at best. As Klaus Rosen has shown (1996), Marcus was already established as saintly in the biographical tradition in antiquity; the *Meditations* in 1558 entered a Christian Europe where its content would invite comparisons with devotional texts such as the *Imitation of Christ*, and which already knew the story of the austere philosopher-king. The discovery in 1815 of the letters between the young Marcus and his teacher, Cornelius Fronto, thus interrupted a well-loved story and complicated the conflict between philosophy and life-writing, between transcendent and immanent; the unhappily embodied (Greek) *Meditations* matched the life in the *Historia Augusta* but not the life in the happily embodied (Latin) letters. The famous Roman historian B.G. Niebuhr, dismissing the letters, called Marcus ‘ein Heiliger’, ‘a saint’ ((1816) 72), and most subsequent writers felt no qualms about editing the letters out of the life. In this chapter, even I will quote only the end of a single letter:

Will you keep well for me, Fronto, wherever you are, my honeyest honey, my love, my pleasure? What is it with me and you? I love someone and he’s not here.¹

The sanctification of Marcus Aurelius before and after 1815 left little room for this surprising love; recently the body has made a comeback. This chapter

will show how Marcus's ancient biography, combined with his autobiography in the *Meditations*, kept the erotic sensibility of the early Fronto/Marcus letters, and Fronto himself, out of the general understanding of Marcus, and largely out of the scholarship as well. Fronto is peripheral to the *Meditations* and the ancient biographies – a bit-part player – but in the letters, naturally, he is central; only Walter Pater, in his 1885 novel *Marius the Epicurean*, keeps Fronto and Marcus together. How did the general separation come about?

1. Embodiment and Autobiography in the *Meditations*

Marcus's book is also known as *To Himself*, and this is a reminder that there is a self in the book – addressed throughout as 'you'. It is an embodied self; indeed, embodiment particularly troubles the writer. The idea that the body is already dead, putrescent, a container of bones and body fluids, comes up repeatedly ('a soul carrying a corpse', quoting Epictetus, 4.41); organisms are water, dust, bones, *grasos* ('goat-smell', 9.36); people who yield to vain desires are said to be spoiled, *phurontai* – their good wetted, dirtied (6.16.4, 8.1; compare the body as *phurama*, and disposable, 7.68, and the world as *phurmos*, 12.14).² Marcus mentions many body fluids with disgust, but expresses a particular contempt for ejaculate: remarking on human beings as *ephemera*, 'creatures of a day' (4.48.2), he says, 'Yesterday a little mucus (*muxarion*), tomorrow a mummy or ashes'. This does not mean 'One day you have a cold, next day you're dead'. Compare 6.13, on viewing earthly goods as effluvia: 'and as for the things to do with intercourse, [it's just] internal rubbing together and release with a spasm of mucus (*muxariou*)'.

The 'you' addressed is male, and married, as in a passing remark about 'your wife' (9.3.1); the historical Marcus was married, and his wife Faustina bore 12 children. The writer addresses himself 'as Roman and male' (*hôs Rômaios kai arrên*, 2.5), and reminds himself to have the spirit of a creature male (*arrênos*), senior, political, Roman, a ruler (3.5). Goodness is associated with maleness: Antoninus Pius behaved 'stalwartly' (*errômenôs*, 1.16.9), and so should Marcus be *errômenon* (6.30.1); *andria*, 'manliness', is among the good qualities (5.12, cf. 8.1); to be angry is not manly (*andrikon*), but being gentle is truly more male (*arrenikôteron*), and has strength and sinews and *andreia* (11.18.10). To do wrong from desire (*epithumia*) is more female (*thêluterous*) than to do wrong from anger (2.10). A striking rush of epithets, given as a single entry, describes the bad character (4.28): 'A black character, a female (*thêlu*) character, a stubborn character, like a wild animal, like an ox, like a small child, stupid,

fraudulent, coarse, sleazy, tyrannical.’ The structure of this list suggests that the final adjective is a predicate, and could better be translated ‘this is what a tyrant is’. This is what Marcus does not want to be – he leads off a list of good qualities including stalwartness with the command ‘don’t behave like Caesar’ (*mê apokaisarôthêis*, 6.30); a problem, because he was Caesar.

None of this fits with the flirtatious young Marcus of the letters; even the remarks on sex in the autobiographical Book 1 consist of denials:

- 1.16.2, in a list of model actions observed in his father (i.e., Antoninus Pius): ‘and the stopping (*to pausai*) of things to do with the loves of boys’
- 1.17.2, ‘and the not having been brought up for a longer time in the same house as the concubine of my grandfather; and having preserved my *hōra*; and not having been made a man (*andrôthenai*) before my season (*hōra*), but even to have put off the time’³
- 1.17.6, ‘not having touched Benedicta or Theodotus, but even later, when I underwent erotic passions, having been cured’

The Marcus of the Fronto letters does not appear here, and the life of Marcus Aurelius in the Western imagination fades into the troubled embodiment of the *Meditations*.

2. Translating Marcus Aurelius

The *Meditations* began to be translated as it was first put into print, and translation is reception, often expressly intended to broaden the reach of a text – here a text difficult even for scholars of Greek.⁴ From the beginning, promising moral guidance, they write as Christians to Christians, in a world in which education was largely Christian. Most translators’ introductions try to integrate the philosophy of the *Meditations* with Marcus’s biography, and they translate according to their view of his life, taking it as axiomatic that the life must match the work.

The Xylander edition appeared in Geneva in 1558, with a Latin translation the next year; previously, Fray Antonio de Guevara had published a book with the subtitle *libro áureo del emperador Marco Aurelio* (1528), and this quasi-biography had been translated by Lord Berners in 1535 as *The Golden Boke of Marcus Aurelius* (a title at times applied to the *Meditations*) and by Sir Thomas North (1557) as *The Diall of Princes*, dedicated to Queen Mary: Marcus was a model prince before Xylander.⁵ Translation of the *Meditations* itself into English begins with Meric Casaubon (1634), who claims in his prefatory note to the reader that by him the book is first ‘made common and intelligible’. Casaubon, son of the great classical scholar Isaac Casaubon, found through his

early publications support from the powerful William Laud, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. Casaubon thus identifies himself in the dedication as ‘Your Grace’s Humbly devoted Chaplain’, further remarking, ‘I Present here unto you the Writings of a King’, because it is one of the Archbishop’s ‘commendations’ that he is ‘truly *philobasileus*’ – king-loving: the Civil War loomed on the horizon. The dedication goes on, however, to pay a compliment to the Archbishop that surely applies to every reader since. Although the ‘you’ addressed by the book is Marcus himself, it is easy to forget this, and feel that the book is addressing you, yourself, as you read. So Casaubon to his Archbishop: ‘they are the Writings of the Wisest, the Learned’st, the Best that ever was among Heathen Kings ... in reading them You shall often read Your self’. Another reason, then, for the book’s popularity: as Marcus, in writing it, was putting on his philosopher outfit, so readers since then have been dressing up as Marcus – a Roman emperor, and not just any emperor.

Anonymous French translations begin in the 1650s, some dedicated to Queen Christina of Sweden, but the one most widely distributed (or pirated) was done by the celebrated classicists André and Anne Dacier in 1690–1691. Accordingly, the next translation into English, by Jeremy Collier in 1701, also translates ‘the Emperor’s life, written by Monsieur D’acier’. Collier, a renegade clergyman several times imprisoned for his loyalty to James II, became even more notorious for his critique of the theater as immoral. Yet his translation was roundly abused by his successors as coarse, and indeed Collier translates the denials of Book 1 into terms he too clearly recognized: (1.16.1), ‘To have no *He-Sweet-Hearts*, and Boy-Favourites’; identifying Benedicta and Theodotus in a marginal note as ‘The one most probably a famous Wench, and the other a court Catamite’. Collier was followed by two Glasgow professors, the truculent Hellenist James Moor and the eminent moral philosopher Francis Hutcheson, in 1742, as part of an ambitious endeavor to disseminate classical literature; by James Thomson, Gentleman, in 1747, writing ‘in an Abundance of Leisure’; by the sarcastic Richard Graves, Rector of Claverton (near Bath) in 1792, who fears ‘The diffusion of science amongst all ranks of people, in this age’ has become so general that no one will care for Marcus Aurelius, and who must be the only translator to quote *Tristram Shandy* (18n). These disparate men unite in esteeming Marcus Aurelius as a prince endowed with reason. Translations were made in Germany in 1755 and in France by Thomas Rousseau in 1797–1798 (who styled himself ‘Citoyen’ and wove anti-clerical remarks into his translation) and by the royal huntsman Jean-Pierre de Joly in 1803 (who reorganized the whole book and corresponded with Winckelmann about manuscripts ((1803) 26–27)). In 1815 Angelo Mai published in Milan the Marcus and Fronto letters he had found there, followed hastily by Niebuhr’s dismissive and overwhelmingly influential edition in 1816.

Previous commentators had been satisfied to turn to the *Historia Augusta* for a biographical sketch; now they had this new and awkward material. The appearance of the letters was oddly reflected in a translation of the *Meditations* produced in 1843 by the French classicist Pierre-Alexis Pierron, still being re-issued in 1891. Seriously, even passionately, concerned with the ‘immense moral progress’ ((1891) 24) made by Stoicism from Zeno to Marcus, Pierron in his Introduction argues that Marcus deserves the highest credit for reasoning out the principles of liberty and fraternity independently of his Christian contemporaries (38). History is not Pierron’s interest; he appends 50 pages of Marcus’s letters to Fronto (355–418), strictly to provide a contrast in ideas and style, ‘despite their lack of intrinsic value’ (353). He takes the translations of the letters directly from the 1830 version by Armand Cassan, and makes no comment of his own.

In 1862 George Long published a translation of the *Meditations* that became what a later translator called the ‘authorized version’ for the Anglophone world in the 19th century (Haines (1916) xix). This translation went through numerous editions, some of them pirated, and, although many subsequent translations have been published, in its various incarnations Long’s is probably still the one most widely extant in Anglophone libraries. He himself was a remarkable person: he left England in 1824 at the age of 24 to hold the first chair in ancient languages at the University of Virginia, where he spent four years; he subsequently taught for almost 20 years at the University of London and for another 20 at Brighton College, following his great desire to bring classical texts to a wider public (he was active from the 1830s onward in the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and edited the *Penny Cyclopaedia* and the *Bibliotheca Classica*).⁶

Accordingly, Long in his *Meditations* sets a scholarly standard for his popular audience. He is not one to obfuscate; he translates *Meditations* 1.16.1 literally, even with biographical reference to Antoninus Pius: ‘And I observed that he had overcome all passions for boys’. (Compare the Glasgow translation in 1742, ‘abstinence from all impure lusts’; Thomson in 1747, ‘His laying aside and disapproving the customary passion for Boys’; Graves in 1792, ‘He had no favourites, or any licentious amours’; and later editions of the Long translation that change ‘boys’ to ‘joys’.)⁷ Long describes the Fronto letters, if briefly, in his usual businesslike style: ‘There are extant letters between Fronto and Marcus, which show the great affection of the pupil for the master, and the master’s great hopes of his industrious pupil’ ((1887) 2, citing Niebuhr’s edition). But reconciling the *Meditations* with the persecutions of Christians under Marcus takes up most of Long’s attention. Repeating the *Historia Augusta* story about people keeping images of Marcus among their household gods, Long comments, ‘He was in a manner made a saint’ ((1887) 8).

At the end of the biographical introduction Long lets himself go and invokes a hero who valued the *Meditations* ((1887) 26–27):

The little book of Antoninus has been the companion of some great men. Machiavelli's Art of War and Marcus Antoninus were the two books which were used when he was a young man by Captain John Smith, and he could not have found two writers better fitted to form the character of a soldier and a man. Smith is almost unknown and forgotten in England his native country, but not in America where he saved the young colony of Virginia. He was great in his heroic mind and his deeds in arms, but greater still in the nobleness of his character.

After the elevated addressees of the 17th and 18th centuries, John Smith is unexpected – a flashback to Long's American sojourn.⁸ Long's continued loyalty to the American South is manifested in an author's note prefixed to the 1869 edition and replicated thereafter, in which he responds angrily to a pirated edition of his translation that appeared in America with a dedication to Ralph Waldo Emerson. After nasty remarks about the morality of 'American politicians' and allusions to the Civil War, Long says the only man to whom he would dedicate the book is 'the noble Virginian soldier, whose talents and virtues place him by the side of the best and wisest man who sat on the throne of the Imperial Caesars' – that is, Robert E. Lee.

The authority of Long's translation was affirmed by perhaps the single most influential Victorian critic, Matthew Arnold (1863). Arnold makes his review into an appreciation of Marcus Aurelius, thereby augmenting the worth of Long's translation, and does not omit to flourish his own bona fides as 'this son of Dr. Arnold' (headmaster of Rugby School, himself fictionalized in 1857 in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*). Arnold portrays the edition as addressed to the public rather than to scholars, surely a help to sales; furthermore, considering Marcus's 'crabbed' Greek,

Marcus Aurelius's book is one which, when it is rendered so accurately as Mr. Long renders it, even those who know Greek tolerably well may choose to read rather in the translation than in the original. ((1865) 234)

For Arnold, unlike the 18th-century translators, the *Meditations* directly addresses Christian doubts; the first lines of his conclusion were to be widely quoted:

And so he remains the especial friend and comforter of all scrupulous and difficult, yet pure and upward-striving souls, in those ages most especially that walk by sight not by faith, that have no open vision; he cannot give such souls, perhaps, all they yearn for, but he gives them much; and what he gives them, they can receive.

Yet no, it is not on this account that such souls love him most; it is rather because of the emotion which gives to his voice so touching an accent, it is because he, too, yearns as they do for something unattained by him. What an affinity for Christianity had this persecutor of the Christians!

As for Marcus's life, Arnold briefly goes over the sources, and makes no mention of the Fronto letters.

3. Parenthesis: Biography and Hagiography

Nineteenth-century histories did not neglect the reign of Marcus Aurelius, but here I can only glance at the lurid account in Charles Merivale's *History of the Romans under the Empire*, in which the turbulence and precipitous decline of that reign are compared, romantically, with Niagara Falls ((1865) 281). Biographies include the long introduction to Hastings Crossley's odd (and rare) study of Book 4 of the *Meditations* (1882), and a general-audience life by Paul Barron Watson (1884). The latitude Watson claims for the biographer can be summed up in his entirely imaginary account of Marcus's boyhood romance with his cousin Faustina (34–35):

From the days when he first, a little city boy, used to go out to his uncle's country houses to pass the summer holidays, he had formed a warm attachment to his pretty little cousin, Faustina. She was only a year or two younger than himself, and, as they roamed over the beautiful hills together, we may picture to ourselves the games in which they figured as husband and wife; how they built their castles in the air, and plighted themselves to travel together through this happy world. In such sports as these the days flew by, until they both began to realize the deep meaning at the bottom of the words they had so lightly uttered.

This pretty much paints over anything odd between Marcus and Fronto, but, just in case, Watson makes sure we know how extremely decrepit Fronto was when he became Marcus's teacher (a tactic that dates back to Niebuhr). Watson never explicitly betrays any uneasiness over the content of the letters, but he does prune them so as to avoid anything that might mar his valentine, as in his quotation of the letter that appears at the beginning of this essay ((1884) 45): 'Take care of yourself, my best and dearest Fronto, wherever you are. The fact is that I love you, and you are far away.' Note the missing endearments.

Conventional history and biography coexisted in the 19th century with a strain that must be called hagiography. The *History of Marcus Aurelius* published in 1836 by Lydia Howard Sigourney came from the pen of a popular American writer, known primarily as a poet and sometimes dubbed 'the Sweet Singer of Hartford', whose renown spawned numerous women's study groups

named after her. Sigourney designs her *History* for the home-schooling of children by their mothers or possibly for use by primary school teachers (iii); the level is suitable for children, with vocabulary lessons throughout and study questions at the end of each chapter. In one of the most ironic turns of an ironic story, Sigourney begins by explaining that

History is what is true, or a narrative of events that have taken place. Fiction is what is not true. . . . Now as Truth is better than Falsehood, History should be prized more than Fiction. (2)

This does not keep her from making up a story about how good young Marcus was to his sister (26–27; he barely mentions her in the *Meditations*), or from skipping the part about boys in her extensive quotation from *Meditations* 1.16 (37–39, evidently based on the 1742 Glasgow translation, although without attribution). Although Marcus's good behavior toward his teachers is one of her main themes, Fronto never appears, Mai and Niebuhr have made no impression in Hartford; Sigourney's book demonstrates again how knowledge can get lost in circulation. Children would learn about Marcus Aurelius, if ever, as virtuous, like the truthful George Washington and the honest Abraham Lincoln, and so 'what everyone knows' comes into being.

Sigourney foreshadows the gigantic figure of Frederic Farrar, whose influence in the second half of the 19th century was hardly less than Matthew Arnold's: headmaster, author of best-selling children's books (most famously *Eric, or Little by Little* (1858)), friend of Darwin, philologist, theologian (author of the world best-seller *Life of Christ* (1874)), he rose to become Queen Victoria's chaplain and Archdeacon of Westminster, which he used as a bully pulpit to bring evangelical ideas into the Church of England. Farrar's experiences teaching at Harrow (1855–1871) seem to have impelled him to address the issue of threats to boys' chastity; in the teeth of the letters, he enlists young Marcus on the side of innocence. In 1868 he brought out *Seekers after God*, published in Macmillan's Sunday Library of Household Reading. The series was addressed to families, and Farrar speaks here to children, thus (like Sigourney) sharply pointing the distance between the 1800s and the present. His book tells the lives of three Stoic heroes: Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. One whole chapter and part of a second are devoted to Marcus's education, and here Farrar emphasizes 'the bloom and beauty of a pure and honourable boyhood' (265).

After a review of the blessings Marcus counts in Book 1 of the *Meditations*, Farrar concludes with a salute to Marcus's overall moral purity and, in particular, to his chastity (269–70):

this earlier chapter [i.e., from Book 1] has also a special value for the young. It offers a picture which it would indeed be better for them and for us if they could be induced to study. If even under

‘That fierce light that beats upon the throne’,

the life of Marcus Aurelius shows no moral stain, it is still more remarkable that the free and beautiful boyhood of this Roman prince had early learnt to recognise only the excellence of his teachers, their patience and firmness, their benevolence and sweetness, their integrity and virtue. Amid the frightful universality of moral corruption he preserved a stainless conscience and a most pure soul; he thanked God in language which breathes the most crystalline delicacy of sentiment and language, that he had preserved uninjured the flower of his early life, and that under the calm influences of his home in the country, and the studies of philosophy, he had learnt to value chastity as the sacred girdle of youth, to be retained and honoured to his latest years.

The quotation here from the 1862 ‘Dedication’ of *Idylls of the King* aligns Marcus, in passing, with Prince Albert (d. 1861), who there is praised for preserving ‘the white flower of a blameless life’ under that fierce light. Teachers are recognized only for virtue (‘early’ here pasted over the *Meditations*). It perhaps goes without saying that Farrar, in paraphrasing 1.16 (267–68), does not say anything about stopping the love of boys.

Farrar’s outline of Marcus’s adult life continues the focus on purity (293):

So blameless was the conduct of Marcus Aurelius that neither the malignity of contemporaries nor the spirit of posthumous scandal has succeeded in discovering any flaw in the extreme integrity of his life and principles.

This introduces a long excursus on the persecution of Christians under Marcus, in which Marcus is exonerated. After a review of the high points of the *Meditations*, Farrar concludes the section on Marcus with a vision of him writing in his tent among the barbarians, one which echoes down the years, through generations of translators, to *Gladiator* (316–17):

I sometimes imagine that I see him seated on the borders of some gloomy Pannonian forest or Hungarian marsh; through the darkness the watchfires of the enemy gleam in the distance; but both among them, and in the camp around him, every sound is hushed, except the tread of the sentinel outside the imperial tent; and in that tent long after midnight sits the patient Emperor by the light of his solitary lamp, and ever and anon, amid his lonely musings, he pauses to write down the pure and holy thoughts which shall better enable him, even in a Roman palace, even on barbarian battlefields, daily to tolerate the meanness and the malignity of the men around him; daily to amend his own shortcomings, and, as the sun of earthly life begins to set, daily to draw nearer and nearer to the Eternal Light. And when I thus think of him, I know not whether the whole of heathen antiquity, out of its gallery of stately and royal figures, can furnish a nobler, or purer, or more lovable picture than that of this crowned philosopher and laurelled hero, who was yet one of the humblest and one of the most enlightened of all ancient ‘Seekers after God’.

The one letter Farrar chooses to quote is the one that begins this essay. Unsurprisingly, Farrar ends his translation of the letter, from which he takes only three sentences, well before the closing; he cuts off at 'I had a long talk with my mother, who was lying on her couch' (273). From this Farrar draws his moral:

Who knows how much Aurelius and how much the world may have gained from such conversation as this, with a mother from whom he had learnt to hate even the thought of evil?

So he draws the reader, without so noting, back from the letters to Book I of the *Meditations*, where Marcus thus commemorates his mother (1.3). The rapturous endearments, and Fronto, are not there.⁹

4. Translation Again

Marcus's next English translator was Gerald H. Rendall, who published one translation (with lengthy introduction) in 1898, and a second one, considerably altered, in 1901. In 1898, Principal and Professor of Greek at University College Liverpool, he establishes his lineage among critics ((1898) iv):

To Renan, they are 'the most human of all books;' 'the gospel that will never grow old.' To Myers 'the Life of Marcus' – and the *Thoughts*, they only, are the Life – 'will remain for ever the normal high-water mark of the unassisted virtue of man.' To Matthew Arnold ...

And out come the 'pure and upward-striving souls'. The insistence here on deriving Marcus's biography solely from the *Meditations* conforms to the general tendency to read it as gospel.

Rendall again focuses on Marcus and the Christians, and his argument reflects the then-current view on the second century AD – that Christianity arose to remedy the rottenness of Roman culture ((1898) cxliv, cxlv, cxlvi):

[it was] the knell of a dying age. ... He stood, but half unconsciously, at the outgoings of an age, filled with a sense of transitoriness in all things human, of epochs, empires, dynasties as well as individuals passing to dust and oblivion. The gloom of decadence haunted and oppressed him. ... Marcus Aurelius Antoninus survives as perhaps the loftiest exemplar of unassisted duty, whom history records ... he stayed the barbarian, till Western civilisation was Christian, and safe.

This exemplifies what might be called the teleological reading of Marcus: he was holding the fort for Christianity. Moreover, he was literally holding the

fort, and at the outposts of empire, doing his lofty duty. You can see exactly where Rendall is headed with this.

And, sure enough, in the 1901 edition (reprinted 12 times between then and 1941), he is now Head Master of Charterhouse, and the pocket-sized book is in Macmillan's Golden Treasury series, representative of the outburst of mass-market editions of 'great books' around 1900.¹⁰ This version, Rendall says, is 'intended for the reader rather than the student', so the translation has been 'revised and in some measure simplified' (he replaced 'renunciation of all boy-favourites' with 'chaste habits', for one thing). Indeed, he remarks ((1941) viii), 'This book has no place in the curriculum of schools; for its value lies in content, not form', causing the reader to pause for thought as to what his idea of a curriculum was. He still seems to have a youthful or at least an unsophisticated, certainly non-Greek-reading audience in mind. The popularity of the *Meditations* is now remarkable:

And hence it comes that today – strange as it may seem – in the whole range of Greek literature no work (excepting the New Testament) has wider vogue and currency, than these untutored meditations of the Imperial moralist.

Imperial and then some; Rendall's prose is, if anything, richer and purpler than ever. Marcus emits (xi) 'the cries which through drawn lips escape the strong man in the hour of solitude'. Not just a strong man, but strong royalty, with echoes of Farrar echoing Tennyson (xxi):

The voice is often as of one crying from lonely heights of uncompanied monarchy ... The moral standpoint is throughout *Imperial* ... the [reader's] interest [in Ethics] culminates when the ideal is exemplified – as English hearts well understand – in the fierce light that beats upon a throne.

And Stoics are not sissies (xxv): 'The Roman thought of duty, as expressed in *virtus* – manliness, the Roman instinct for law, and the Roman sense of religion – binding, omnipresent, impersonal – found a meeting-place in the Stoic creed'.

Lest anyone should miss the point, Hadrian is said to have founded a 'Civil Service' that held the Roman empire together, and Marcus Aurelius is the head civil servant (xxxviii–ix):

there emerges in the person of Antoninus, a new type of Emperor, as permanent chief and director of the vast bureaucracy through whom the provinces were governed ... Rome of this era was a synonym for civilisation, and Roman rule meant for the subject peoples all, and more than all, that English Empire implies for India. From the Euphrates to the Atlantic, from the wall of Antoninus in

North Britain to the Tropic of Cancer in Africa, over all western and southern Europe, with Asia Minor, Armenia, Syria, and Egypt, ran the Imperial writ. Throughout the huge domain . . . war was remembered only by the tramp of legionaries passing to distant stations that watched and garrisoned the frontiers, while within the realm sure guarantees of order, security, and justice were provided under the august supremacy of the universal *Romana Pax* and *Romana Lex*.

This state of affairs was about to end – ‘Clouds gathered round his later years’ (xl) – but Marcus rose to the task of staving off ruin (xli): ‘it is probably just to say that his tenacity and generalship saved the Western Empire for the two centuries still needed to engraft Christian civilisation upon the West’.

Marcus’s letters to Fronto do make a brief appearance in this confection, as the conveyor of playful messages from his mother, amidst his ‘happy and innocent boyhood’ (xxxv).

The Loeb Classical Library in 1911 began its work of bringing translations to the adult learner accompanied by the original text on the facing page (see Stray (1992)). The Loeb *Marcus Aurelius* was the work of the learned schoolmaster C.R. Haines, who would go on to edit and translate the Fronto letters for the Loeb series in 1919–1920. There, his introductory remarks reflect his reading of Walter Pater’s influential 1885 novel *Marius the Epicurean*, which itself makes Marcus and Fronto into players in the drama of the triumph of Christianity over paganism; Haines quotes Pater’s line about the letters as breathing ‘the long buried fragrance of a famous friendship of the ancient world’ ((1919) xxii). Echoing Long, Haines associates Marcus with great readers ((1916) xiv):

The wonderful revelation here given of the *askesis* of the spiritual athlete in the contests of life is full of inspiration still even for the modern world. It has been and is a source of solace and strength to thousands, and has helped to mould the characters of more than one leader of men, such as Frederick the Great, Maximilian of Bavaria, Captain John Smith, the ‘saviour of Virginia’, and that noble Christian soldier, General Gordon.

Frederick the Great, though, has a footnote: ‘Who, however, in the field of morality cannot be said to have profited by its lessons.’

The mass marketing of classical texts escalated with the expansion of Penguin in the 1960s to markets outside the UK, particularly the college textbook trade. Maxwell Staniforth’s Penguin translation of 1964, despite the date, comes from the last of the Victorian throwbacks: educated at Charterhouse under Rendall (1906–1912), he fought in World War I, after which he moved to Argentina, returning to England to spend 25 years in Dorset as a parish priest,

ending as a Rural Dean. Possibly this long seclusion produced the timewarp effect visible in his introduction; certainly his experience as a parish priest affects its tone.

Staniforth's lead-in addresses a reader interested, like a parishioner, in moral self-improvement, though not so much in working hard (7):

You may take up the book or lay it down at any point you choose, and read as many or as few of the entries as suits your mood. Marcus, in short, has provided us with an excellent book for the bedside.

Such private self-improvement is suitable for Christians (9): 'this book is as truly a manual of personal devotion as Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* – with which it has often been compared'. And, again, it is not for sissies; Stoicism is (10) 'a code which was manly, rational, and temperate'.

Sure enough, as Staniforth gets going, he envisions the noble emperor holding the fort for Christianity (20):

Marcus remained alone at the post of duty . . . [he] returned to the Danube to resume his task of holding back the onrushing tide of barbarism. There, among the misty swamps and reedy islands of that melancholy region, he consoled the hours of loneliness and exile by penning the volume of his *Meditations*.

This is far from the only echo of his predecessors in Staniforth's introduction, which, by paraphrasing inaccurately, gets many of the details of Marcus's life wrong. It is clear that no one at Penguin was checking.

The bottom line is that, from the mid-19th century to the 1960s, the historical Marcus was not really the main focus of interest, especially among those who retailed Marcus to the audience beyond scholars. Despite the best efforts of a few translators and biographers, the letters remained well in the background, rarely read or discussed in connection with the *Meditations*; meanwhile, Staniforth's Penguin marched on like a Christian soldier. Where Arnold pointed out that 'Most English people who knew Marcus Aurelius before Mr. Long appeared as his introducer, knew him through Jeremy Collier' ((1865) 231), and Haines that 'it is from [Long's translation] that most people know their Marcus Aurelius' ((1916) xix), so several generations of students will have known Marcus Aurelius from Staniforth.

But Staniforth is the last of the readers of Marcus as Christian, and an increasingly secular century spawned a secular Marcus, enabled by the fall of Classics from its unquestioned centrality in culture and curriculum along with the rising doubt that we have anything to learn from the past, the companion of a rising lack of interest in that past. That is, the historical Marcus becomes more visible as history itself comes to be disregarded.

In 1963 G.M.A. Grube published a new *Meditations* for Hackett, a press specializing in translations for use in college courses. Grube, a Fabian at Cambridge in the 1920s, became an eminent Hellenist in Canada and remained an active socialist (see Briggs (1994) 236–37). His introduction and approach are basically independent of his predecessors (except for a brief reappearance of the ‘imperial tent’, xiv); he begins with an analysis of the principate from the Civil War of 68 AD onward, locating Marcus’s reign in its immediate historical context and without the importation of teleology or the rise and fall of the Roman narrative arc.

Grube’s interest is decidedly in Stoicism and not in Christianity. He describes the *Meditations* as ‘a strange, noble, and sad book’ (xv), addressing a generation of readers whom he does not expect to see something familiar in Marcus’s musings. Christianity appears only as a social problem in Marcus’s reign (xxi), although Grube does refer repeatedly to Stoicism as a ‘religion’ (xi, xii, xiii, xiv), if insufficiently activist (xix). He concludes his introduction with the thought that the *Meditations* might be of use to a contemporary reader (xxiv):

We can, I believe, find much in it to help us in our own lives, in our own thoughts and actions; for we too live in a world where the idealist who works to realize his ideals may well, like Marcus, feel very tired and very close to despair.

Even without Christianity, then, the *Meditations* continues to be treated as a practical manual, and Marcus as a role model, personally knowable.

In 1989 the Oxford World Classics series re-published A.S.L. Farquharson’s 1944 translation, adding commentary by R.B. Rutherford. The difference between Rutherford’s assumptions and those of Rendall – or Staniforth – is dramatic. Rutherford describes the *Meditations* as ‘therapeutic’ (xiv); ‘Marcus sees his writing as self-therapy’. He is to be healed, not saved; no Christianity here, much less Christian teleology. On the contrary; Rutherford politely corrects ‘modern readers’ interested in the growth of Christianity in the time of Marcus by setting such interest ‘in retrospect’ – at the time, as one problem among many, Christianity would not have meant much to Marcus (xxiii). Perhaps accordingly, it is Rutherford who points out that Book I incorporates ‘even some tantalizing details about [Marcus’s] sexual life’ (xvi), making him the first to be tantalized, or the first to say so – the first, perhaps, to think his readers would find Marcus’s sex life of interest in itself, rather than as something to be controlled. Times have changed (xx):

If we accept, however tentatively and unfashionably, that literature can be relevant to life and that readers can learn from and be inspired by the writings of the past, then Marcus Aurelius, whose clear insight into human failings, not

least his own, led him not to cynical inertia but to increased resolve, may still have something to teach us today.

The very rationale for a translation of Marcus Aurelius, with helpful notes and introduction, is on the line. What is it for? ‘Self-therapy’ provides an answer for a secular readership.

The most recent of Marcus’s translators into English, Gregory Hays (2002), continues along the lines laid out by Rutherford, with one surprising gesture toward the past. Far from making Marcus a model for the pious, Hays introduces a reader presumed ignorant of Roman history to ‘a small and eccentric sect known as the Christians’ (xiii). They are described in the third person – not as ‘us’ – and as insignificant to Marcus, who ‘had more serious concerns than this troublesome cult’ (xiv). The century and a half that separate Hays from Long are measured by Hays’s reference to the martyrdoms at Lyons as ‘a virtual pogrom’ (xiv). Where Rutherford still felt obliged to detach Marcus from Christianity for some readers, Hays, like Grube, is writing for someone not also reading Thomas à Kempis.

What is the point of translating the *Meditations*, then, for Hays? He does regard the book as a form of canonization, but not a religious one; Marcus, he says, would have been surprised ‘to find himself enshrined in the Modern Library of the World’s Best Books’ (xxxv). Like Rutherford, Hays views the book as therapy: ‘a self-help book in the most literal sense’ (xxxvii); ‘the entries are as much process as product’ (xxxviii); the entries are ‘the philosophical equivalent of “Phone Dr. re appt. Tues.?”’ (xl). Marcus’s ideas are evaluated in passing in comparison with those of ‘modern grief counselors’. Like Rutherford, Hays worries about the usefulness of the past; hopefully, he rolls out a venerable argument (xlix):

it has always exerted a fascination . . . on those who can best appreciate the pressures that Marcus himself faced. The *Meditations* was among the favorite reading of Frederick the Great; a recent American president has claimed to reread it every few years. But it has attracted others too, from poets like Pope, Goethe, and Arnold to the southern planter William Alexander Percy.

Frederick the Great is here just the shadow of a great name – no qualms about his morals arise; nor about those of the American president (William Jefferson Clinton); Arnold makes a cameo appearance here as a poet; and, out of the blue, this planter. Hays in 2002 was a professor of Classics at the University of Virginia, following in the footsteps of George Long, although without John Smith and Robert E. Lee. He is speaking to executives.

The marketing department of the Modern Library takes Hays’s cue. The jacket front flap begins, ‘Few ancient works have been as influential as the

Meditations of Marcus Aurelius', and goes on from there: 'one of the greatest works of spiritual and ethical reflection ever written', 'required reading for statesmen and philosophers alike', 'for anyone who struggles to reconcile the demands of leadership with a concern for personal integrity and spiritual well-being'. Marcus may no longer be a Christian, but he has never stopped being a leader of men.

5. Conclusions

This short overview, biased as it is towards 19th-century works in English, still cannot convey the full weight of Christianity in the modern reception of Marcus Aurelius. Even scholars' readings of Marcus as a Stoic, based in the Greek text of the *Meditations*, cannot completely evade Niebuhr's assessment of Marcus as a saint. And, even in a time currently secular, the Hellenism of the 19th century keeps its grip. The Loeb *Meditations* in their green binding have no contact with the Fronto letters in their red binding; even the fact that Marcus wrote letters in Latin is widely unknown, even to most classicists. Integrating the young Marcus of the letters with the old Marcus of the *Meditations* still poses problems both biographical and philosophical, yet a true account must at least juxtapose them. Fronto writes of seeing souvenir figures of Marcus everywhere in Rome, and the *Historia Augusta* writer says he lived on as an icon, but once he was 18.¹¹ The relationship with Fronto attested in the letters is as remarkable in its own way as the *Meditations* are in theirs.

NOTES

- * Translations throughout are my own except as otherwise indicated. Thanks to Beverly Graf for discussion, to Anthony Birley for his kindness, to Leofranc Holford-Strevens for his always generous help, and to Marcel van Ackeren for his patience.
- 1. In the conventional reference system, these lines come from *Letters to Marcus Caesar* 4.6; this volume of Fronto's letters includes letters *from* Marcus before he was emperor, of which this is one. For a collection and translation of the early Fronto/Marcus letters, see Richlin (2006).
- 2. Cf. 2.2, 4.3.2, 10.11, 10.19, 12.1, 12.14.
- 3. The Greek word *hōra* here, in its first use, like the Latin *aetas* or *flos aetatis*, is conventionally used to refer to the dangerously attractive period of boys' early adolescence (cf. Cicero, *For Caelius* 9); compare *Meditations* 1.16.8, where Antoninus Pius does not care about food, clothing, or the *hōra* of his slaves (*sōmatôn*).

4. On reception, see Martindale and Thomas (2006), especially essays by Lianeri on translation, by Thomas on translating the erotic in the 19th century, and by McElduff on non-elite readers.
5. For details on publication dates throughout, see Legg (1910); he surveys 193 editions and translations from the 17th century to 1908, with translations into ten European languages plus Persian.
6. For Long's hiring at the determinedly nonsectarian University of Virginia, see the fascinating account in Bruce ((1920) 367–73); Thomas Jefferson did not want clergy on the faculty.
7. This seems to begin with the Harvard Classics Edition, ed. Charles W. Eliot (1909), and is picked up by later popular editions.
8. Long perhaps has in mind John Smith's self-description ((1630) 2), 'His studie was Machiavills Art of warre, and Marcus Aurelius'. Probably not, then, the *Meditations*, but the quasi-historical Marcus Aurelius, especially since Smith (born 1580) says he left school at 13 and spent the (few) intervening years before this study in swashbuckling pursuits.
9. The philosopher Ernest Renan, who, like Farrar, wrote a *Life of Jesus* (1863), continued this project into a multi-volume *Histoire des origines du Christianisme*, of which the seventh appeared in 1881 as *Marc-Aurèle et la fin du monde antique*. But Renan deals with Marcus only as emperor, and historically, rather than as a moral exemplar.
10. My thanks to Catherine Smith of the Charterhouse Archives for the dates of Rendall's tenure as Headmaster (1898–1911), and of John Hamilton Maxwell Staniforth's time there as a student (1906–1912).
11. Fronto, *Letters to Marcus Caesar* 4.12.6; *HA Marcus Antoninus* 18.6.

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CHAPTER 33

Marcus Aurelius and Neostoicism in Early Modern Philosophy*

Jill Kraye

Fifteenth- and 16th-century scholars had little direct knowledge of the early Greek Stoics, from Zeno to Posidonius, whose writings have survived only in scattered fragments. They therefore regarded the late Stoics of the Roman era, Seneca and Epictetus, for whom we have substantial bodies of work, as the most important representatives of the school – Cicero, though full of useful information, was considered to be a fellow-traveler rather than a paid-up member. The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, now ranked as one of the masterpieces of Roman Stoicism, were noticeably absent from the Renaissance canon of Stoic authorities. This is readily explained by the very different transmission of the three major late Stoic authors (Kraye (2008a) 10–22). Seneca’s philosophical writings, particularly his letters, had been popular since the late Middle Ages and circulated widely both in manuscript and, from 1475, in print (Reynolds (1983) 363–75). The *Enchiridion* of Epictetus was translated into Latin in the 15th century by two Italian humanists: Niccolò Perotti in 1450 and Angelo Poliziano in 1479. The latter version was printed by 1497 and was frequently republished in the 16th and 17th centuries, as were translations of the *Enchiridion* in vernacular languages. The *Discourses* of Epictetus reported by Arrian became available in print in Greek in 1535 and in Latin translation in 1554 (Epictetus (1954) and (1971); Kraye (2001); Oldfather (1927) and (1952)).

In relation to the writings of Seneca and Epictetus, the *Meditations* made a comparatively late entry onto the scene. It was not until 1559 that they became known, in a printed edition containing the Greek text and a Latin translation, made by the Heidelberg professor Wilhelm Holtzmann, better known by the Greek form of his name, Xylander. Only a handful of mentions of the *Meditations* can be found before the appearance of this edition. This is

not surprising given the work's very thin manuscript tradition: the full 12 books of the *Meditations* are found in only two codices. There are, in addition, various collections of extracts; all of these, however, along with the two complete manuscripts, go back to a common archetype. This fact, combined with Marcus's Greek style, which for all its poetic power can at times be grammatically awkward and compressed to the point of obscurity, present huge challenges to the textual critic and the commentator. Even today some passages remain hopelessly corrupt or unintelligible (Marcus Aurelius (1944) I: xv–lxxix).

Although the *Meditations* were effectively unknown before 1559, Renaissance readers were well acquainted with the life and character of Marcus Aurelius or, as he was more commonly called in this period, Marcus Antoninus. The main source used by scholars, from the 14th century onwards, was the biography of the emperor attributed to Julius Capitolinus in the *Historia Augusta*, which not only gives high praise to his political and moral virtues but also stresses his devotion to philosophy: 'If Plato himself returned to life, he would not be such a philosopher' (*HA Marcus Antoninus Philosophus* XIX); moreover, it refers more than once to Marcus's adherence to Stoic doctrines (III, XVI, XXII). Other Latin and Greek historians of the later Roman Empire known to Renaissance authors, such as Herodian (translated into Latin by Poliziano), Dio Cassius, Aurelius Victor, and Eutropius, along with a variety of classical authors, from Galen to Philostratus, paint a similar picture of him as a wise, virtuous, and philosophically minded emperor. The 16th-century image of Marcus Aurelius can be seen in Sir Thomas Elyot's statement of 1531: 'by his actes he confirmed the sayeng of Plato (*Republic* 473d), That blessed is that publicke weale wherin either philosophers do reigne, or els kinges be in philosophie studious' (Elyot (1967) I: 104).

The appearance in print of the *Meditations* reinforced this positive view of Marcus. It also brought into discredit, at least among scholars, the *Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius*, a crude forgery by Antonio de Guevara, first published in Spanish in 1528 (Redondo (1976) 465–522), which became a runaway bestseller – between 1535 and 1586 there were some 13 editions of the English translation alone. Rather more unexpectedly, the *editio princeps* of the *Meditations* made no impact on discussions of Stoic philosophy. The Flemish humanist and leading light of the Neostoic movement, Justus Lipsius, certainly knew the work and cited it on occasion in his philological and antiquarian writings, but it does not figure as a source in the two seminal treatises in which he assembled the Stoic scraps scattered throughout the extant corpus of ancient Greek and Latin literature and stitched them together into a coherent account of the school's history and philosophy (Kraye (2007) 40). And even though he included Marcus Aurelius in his list of distinguished Roman Stoics, he continued to regard Epictetus and, especially,

Seneca as by far the two most important members of the school (Lipsius (1604a) 56–64).

The German scholar Kaspar Schoppe, an ex-Protestant turned Counter-Reformation propagandist, followed in Lipsius's footsteps. He put forward a program, in his *Elementa philosophiae Stoicae moralis* of 1606, for the introduction of a highly Christianized form of Stoic moral philosophy into the Catholic educational system as a replacement for the Aristotelian ethics sponsored by the Jesuits (Kraye (2008b)). As the spearhead of his Stoic campaign, he selected not Seneca but Epictetus, whom he calls 'the holiest of philosophers and by a long way the leader of this sect' ('sanctissimu[s] Philosophorum et in ista secta longe princ[eps]'; Schoppe (1606) 30v), quoting *Enchiridion* 31 to show that even though he had no knowledge of the true God, he still had valuable lessons to teach Christians.

The reasons why Marcus Aurelius was not able to compete with Seneca and Epictetus as a key authority for ancient Stoicism were due, at least in part, to the limitations of Xylander's edition of the *Meditations*. The problems start on the title-page, where the book is called 'On Himself or His Life' (*De seipso seu vita sua*). The literal meaning of the Greek title, however, is 'To Himself' (*Ta eis heauton*). As we shall see, early modern scholars came up with a variety of Latin and vernacular equivalents of this title; but Xylander's solution, based on a statement reported in the Byzantine encyclopedia known as the *Suda*, was probably the worst of all, since it gave the misleading impression that the work was an autobiography – a description which, at best, fits only the first of the 12 books.

There were also, as Xylander himself complained, grave difficulties with the Greek text in his manuscript: in his brief annotations he refers to passages so corrupt and obscure that they required a prophet rather than a translator to penetrate their meaning. As if this were not bad enough, his 1559 edition was disfigured by a large number of misprints, which Xylander blamed on the printers. He therefore brought out a second edition in 1568, boasting on the title-page that the text had been 'purged of innumerable errors' ('ab innumeris . . . mendis repurgati').

From the point of view of the history of philosophy, however, the real defect of both Xylander's editions was his failure to place the *Meditations* in the context of ancient Stoicism. The term 'Stoic' does not appear in either of his prefaces, nor in any of his annotations. He does assert in passing that Marcus's manner of philosophizing is similar to that of Epictetus (Marcus Aurelius (1568) 157); but this comment is never followed up. While his annotations contain occasional references to Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, no passage from any other Stoic author is ever adduced.

Xylander quotes from the Bible, chiefly to make linguistic points: comparing Marcus's use of a Greek word to that of St. Paul or relating his metaphors to

similar phrases in the Psalms. In one case, however, he uses a statement of Marcus about ‘returning to earth’ after death (VI.10) to demonstrate that:

it is not only Holy Scripture which teaches that men were created from the earth and will return to it; but ancient philosophers also record our origin in this way [non . . . tantum sacrae literae docent, hominem esse ex limo creatum foreque in eundem redigatur; sed et antiquissimi philosophi originem nostram eodem retulerunt]. (Marcus Aurelius (1568) 340)

Xylander’s tentative attempt to relate the *Meditations* to the Bible was greatly expanded in later interpretations of the book.

This was, of course, not an uncommon way to approach classical authors at the time. But Marcus Aurelius was, on the face of it, an unpromising candidate for such treatment since Christians were known to have been persecuted during his reign. Moreover, Marcus is one of the handful of ancient pagan authors who actually mentions the Christians, describing them, as one would expect, in far from favorable terms. In *Meditations* XI.3 he praises the soul which is ready and resolved to be released from the body, adding however, that ‘this resolve must arise from a specific decision, not out of sheer opposition, like the Christians, but after reflection and with dignity’ (only in the 19th century did this statement come under suspicion as a possible interpolation). These facts, however uncomfortable they might seem, by no means deterred early modern scholars from interpreting the *Meditations* in a strongly Christian light.

The task of exploiting the *Meditations* as a source of Stoic philosophy was begun by the Genevan humanist Isaac Casaubon in the early years of the 17th century (Matthew and Harrison (2004) X: 459–64). In his famous 1605 commentary on Persius – about which his friend Joseph Scaliger quipped: ‘the sauce is better than the meat’ (Sandys (1908–1921) II: 209) – Casaubon draws extensively on the *Meditations*, presenting the Roman satirist as a thoroughgoing Stoic moralist and accordingly filling his commentary with citations from likeminded authors. It is in these learned notes that the *Meditations* appear for the first time as a key source for Stoic philosophy, in the company of, and on a par with, the writings of Seneca and Epictetus. So, for example, both Seneca (*Letter* 95.52) and Marcus are cited to illustrate the Stoic doctrine, invoked in *Satire* III.72, that human beings are an organic part of the whole universe controlled by nature (Persius (1605) 290–92).

A revised and enlarged version of the Persius commentary was brought out in 1647 by Casaubon’s son Meric, whose own engagement with the *Meditations* – he produced both an English translation and a Greek–Latin edition of the work – was no doubt inspired by his revered father’s interest in the text. Meric has received a good deal of scholarly attention for his intelligent critique of the Royal Society’s cult of experimental science, his naturalistic account of

enthusiasm as a form of pathological melancholy, and his bizarre publication of John Dee's conversations with angels (Matthew and Harrison (2004) X: 464–66). His work as a classical scholar, on the other hand, has always been overshadowed by the enormous reputation of his father: Sandys, in his *History of Classical Scholarship*, devotes seven pages to Isaac and only five lines to Meric (Sandys (1908–1921) II: 204–10). The recent Teubner edition of the *Meditations*, adding insult to injury, attributes the 1634 English translation of the text to Isaac Casaubon, who had died 20 years earlier after spending only the last four years of his life in England, rather than to his Eton and Christ Church educated son (Marcus Aurelius (1979) XXVII).

Meric states in the introduction to his English translation of the *Meditations*: 'The chiefest subject of the Booke is, the vanity of the world and all worldly things, as wealth, honour, life, etc.' It was precisely because Marcus was such a great emperor that his beliefs in this matter were so persuasive. For while a poor man might sincerely inveigh against 'the vanity of wealth and pleasures', one might well suspect 'that they make a vertue of necessitie'. But when a king such as Solomon says that

all was vanity and vexation of the spirit (*Ecclesiastes* 1: 2) . . . is there any man so bewitched and besotted with worldly wealth and pleasure, whom such a confession from such a one, will not move. . . . And if this of Solomon . . . how much more should that confession of Antoninus move us, . . . as Lord and Master . . . of more great kingdoms, then Solomon was of great townes. (Marcus Aurelius (1634) D1r–D2v)

There was a political, as well as a moral and religious, dimension to this slant on Marcus Aurelius. The translation was issued in 1634, during the long run-up to the Civil War, and was dedicated to Casaubon's patron, Archbishop William Laud. Casaubon suggests that these 'writings of the wisest, the learnedest, the best that ever was among heathen kings' will be particularly welcomed by Laud, since he is truly 'a friend to the king' (*philobasileus*) and accounts it no small happiness to serve so great and gracious a sovereign as Charles I (Marcus Aurelius (1634) A3r–v). By the time that Casaubon's Greek–Latin edition of the *Meditations* came out nine years later, Laud was imprisoned in the Tower – he was to be executed in 1645 – and Casaubon's new and more politically correct dedicatee was the antiquarian scholar and parliamentarian John Selden (ibid. *3r–5r).

It was Meric who first gave the work of Marcus Aurelius the English title by which it is still known today, the *Meditations*, or as he put it: *Meditations Concerning Himselfe*, pointing out that by *heautos* the Stoics understood 'a mans reason or intellectual part, and his opinions' (ibid. C1 r–v), these being '(in their judgement) . . . the only thing, that every man in himself could

properly call “Himselfe” (ibid. Kk2 r–v). Casaubon’s notes to his English translation of the *Meditations* are, like most of his writings, rather rambling and anecdotal. Take his comment on this reflection of Marcus on the transitory nature of human life (in Casaubon’s translation): ‘What is man? That which but the other day was vile snivell; and within few dayes shall be eyther an embalmed carkasse, or mere ashes’ (IV.48); Meric uses the reference to ‘ashes’ as a prompt to embark on a lengthy account of a number of funerary urns recently uncovered in a Roman burial ground near Newington in Kent (ibid. Nn4v–Oo3v). Ironically, this digression, which has nothing to do either with the *Meditations* or with Marcus Aurelius, is the only part of Casaubon’s translation to have attracted scholarly interest, since it appears to be the earliest illustrated archaeological report published in Britain (Hunter (1995) 190–92).

Yet, even though it has not been recognized as such, Casaubon’s translation was a serious contribution to the study of ancient philosophy. The Stoic background to Marcus Aurelius’s thought is emphasized, and he is presented as a philosopher who, though ‘not a profest Stoick’ (Marcus Aurelius (1634) MM4r), was nevertheless ‘much addicted unto’ the sect (ibid. D4v). Casaubon attempts to explain the Stoics’ ‘strange and unnatural tenets and paradoxes’ (ibid. Mm4v) and frequently draws on Stoic writers to elucidate the obscurities of Marcus’s text, stating at one point: ‘a better interpreter of Antoninus his minde. . . we cannot desire then Epictetus’ (ibid. Ll3r). He also singles out areas in which the Roman emperor modified and improved on views held by hardline Stoics. He thus praises Marcus for not indulging in the excessive exaltation of ‘humane power and libertie’ found in Seneca (ibid. F3v) and for hedging the Stoic case for suicide ‘with such limitations and restrictions, as might seeme in some manner equivalent to a plaine and direct opposition’ (ibid. Pp2v).

As an Anglican minister, Casaubon was naturally concerned not to endorse those aspects of Marcus Aurelius’s Stoicism ‘which may give offence, as repugnant to our Christian faith and impious, as when hee seemeth . . . to ascribe all things to Fatall necessity’; but in his view it was sufficient in such cases simply to remind Christian readers not to ‘expect from any out of the Church and without Scriptures perfect sound knowledge in these high points’ (ibid. F2v–3r). Casaubon nevertheless praises ‘the marvellous consent of this Heathen mans philosophy with the Holy Scriptures. That it doth in many things agree with the sacred word of God, any man that reades him will easily observe’; for the two great Christian commandments, ‘to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbours as our selves . . . be the very things which in these books are most pressed and stoode upon’ (ibid. Mm 2^r).

This agreement between the *Meditations* and the Bible was not undermined, in Casaubon’s eyes, by the fact that Christians were persecuted during Marcus’s rule; for, even though they had good cause to do so, no early Christians had spoken ill of the emperor or charged him with cruelty. He mitigates the

offensiveness of criticism of Christians in the *Meditations* by citing passages from Epictetus (*Discourses* IV.7.6), Pliny the Younger (*Letter* X.96), and Tertullian (*Apologeticus* 50.15 and *Ad nationes* I.18) which showed that the willingness of ‘godly Christians to seale their profession with their blood’ was commonly ‘mistaken and misinterpreted’ by the pagans as having no ground in reason, ‘as Antoninus . . . doth here alleage’ (Marcus Aurelius (1634) Pp4r).

Casaubon’s English translation of the *Meditations* was followed by a French version of the text, entitled *Pensées morales*, which was first published in 1651, with two further editions in 1655 and 1658. The translator was a Swedish official who had worked for many years in France and who identifies himself solely by the initials B.I.K. In the preface, dated 1650, he defended himself against any of his fellow countrymen who might feel that he should have turned the work into Swedish rather than French by reminding Swedes that they should not feel envious since they had in Queen Christina, to whom he dedicated his translation, a living embodiment of that wisdom which other nations could only read about in the pages of Marcus Aurelius. The *Meditations* could therefore be made available to other nations without provoking resentment at home, in the same way that one might send them a portrait of the queen, in the knowledge that Sweden retained the original (Marcus Aurelius (1658) &4r–v). These words were a hostage to fortune; for in the same year that the second edition came out, the female Marcus Aurelius abdicated her throne and abandoned Sweden forever.

These two translations did much to raise the popular profile of the *Meditations*. Progress in terms of textual criticism was achieved in more scholarly publications, such as Meric Casaubon’s 1643 Greek–Latin edition of the *Meditations*, entitled *De seipso et ad seipsum*, ‘On Himself and To Himself’, in which he attempted to ameliorate Xylander’s Greek text by using new manuscript readings from a collection of extracts, and also by making conjectural emendations, some of which have been accepted by modern editors (Marcus Aurelius (1944) I: xliv–xlv). As in his English translation, the annotations contain much philosophical as well as philological material (e.g. Marcus Aurelius (1643) Dd8r on Stoic fate, and Ee4v–5v on *logoi spermatikoi*, arguing against Lipsius (1604b) 156–59); and here, too, there are occasional references to similarities between the *Meditations* and passages from both the Old and New Testaments (e.g. Marcus Aurelius (1643) Ee5v, where Stoic cosmological doctrines are compared with *Genesis* 1, *John* 1: 1, *Ephesians* 1: 10 and *II Peter* 3: 5–7).

In the *Prolegomena* Meric describes how, before embarking on this enterprise, he called on Thomas Gataker, ‘a man famous among the English for his erudition’, having heard that he too was working on an edition of the *Meditations*. When they met, Gataker showed Meric two fat notebooks – one containing a Greek text and Latin translation, the other a Latin

commentary – both of which were ready to go to press. Gataker, however, despaired of finding a publisher for such a mammoth work in the turbulence of the early 1640s and encouraged Meric to go ahead with his own project (Marcus Aurelius (1643) A2v–3r). As Gataker explained in the preface to his edition, which was not published until 1652, nine years after Meric's, this work was a 40-year labor of love, compiled during the few moments he could spare from his parochial and preaching duties as minister of Rotherhithe in Surrey (Marcus Aurelius (1652) ****4v).

Gataker's edition was, however, no amateurish production: it has been judged to be 'the single major scholarly achievement' of Cambridge University Press during the entire Civil War and Interregnum period (McKitterick (1992–2004) I: 309); and he has been described as 'the great Greek scholar of the Caroline age' (Bywater (1899) 14), whose 'edition has long been, and will always remain, the principal authority for any one undertaking to study or edit the *Meditations*' (Marcus Aurelius (1944) I: xlix), a 'lasting monument of its author's brilliant scholarship and open-minded humanity' (Zuntz (1946) 85). Yet while historians of classical scholarship and bibliographers have taken on board the significance of Gataker's edition, it has been neglected by historians of early modern philosophy. It made a greater contribution to the study of ancient philosophy than Lipsius's 1605 edition of Seneca or Pierre Gassendi's 1649 edition of Book X of Diogenes Laertius; but, unlike Gataker, Lipsius and Gassendi have earned a place in the history of philosophy because, in addition to their humanist scholarship, they also wrote philosophical treatises on Stoicism and Epicureanism respectively (LoLordo (2006); Lagrée (1994)). But even though Gataker's edition of the *Meditations* has been largely ignored by modern historians of philosophy, its importance was recognized by early modern scholars, whether or not they agreed with his interpretations.

Rather than pursuing an academic career at Cambridge, where he was educated, Gataker decided to go to London, preaching for 10 years at Lincoln's Inn, then moving to Rotherhithe, where he remained as a hardworking pastor for the rest of his days. With characteristic modesty, he turned down the mastership of Trinity College Cambridge, offered to him during the Interregnum, pleading his own unworthiness for such an honor, as well as his ill-health. Gataker, who was a moderate Puritan, published various polemical works in English along with a number of sermons, with titles such as *A Good Wife Gods Gift* (he himself would eventually marry four times) and margins bulging with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew quotations (Kraye (2007); Matthew and Harrison (2004) XXI: 625–28). Apart from his edition of the *Meditations*, he produced many other scholarly works in Latin, among them a treatise on diphthongs, written on his sickbed when recovering from a particularly severe attack of colic (Gataker (1697–1698) I: 4–23). This work, apart from providing the explanation for Gataker's quirky Latin orthography – he always leaves out

the *u* after *q* – is indicative of a pedantry which at times distorted his judgment, as, for instance, when he cites various biblical and classical texts (Marcus Aurelius (1652) 1) to justify his cumbersome and ungainly Latin translation of the Greek title of the *Meditations*: *De rebus suis, sive de eis q[u]ae ad se pertinere censebat* (*On His Private Affairs, or the Matters which He Thought Concerned Him*).

In his annotations to the *Meditations*, Gataker follows in the footsteps of Casaubon, whom he cites frequently, by providing accounts of Stoic ethical and cosmological doctrines and by quoting from other Stoic authors in order to clarify the often obscure meaning of the text. The breadth and depth of Gataker's knowledge of the entire gamut of classical literature is genuinely breathtaking. In addition to the standard authorities – Seneca, Epictetus, Cicero, Simplicius, and Diogenes Laertius – there can be few relevant passages in von Arnim's *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* (1921–1924) that are not cited in Gataker's commentary, at times taken over second-hand from Lipsius. His annotations are also a *Who's Who* of early modern scholarship, containing references to the best recent editions and monographs, as well as personal communications on textual matters from eminent Continental humanists such as Claude de Saumaise. Not even the medieval scholastics are neglected.

Yet for all its profound philological and philosophical erudition, the really striking feature of Gataker's edition of Marcus Aurelius is his constant attempt to uncover parallels between the *Meditations* and the Bible. To give some idea of his priorities: the index of classical sources is a page and a half long, while the index of biblical passages goes on for four and a half pages, with the Psalms and letters of St. Paul having the largest entries. Gataker also makes extensive use of the Church Fathers and even of some post-biblical Hebrew exegetical literature, such as *Pirke Aboth*, a set of Jewish ethical sayings preserved as a tractate in the Mishnah and roughly contemporary with the *Meditations*.

Like Casaubon, Gataker is careful to warn readers against those aspects of Marcus's Stoic philosophy which are in conflict with Christianity – his ambiguity, for instance, on the immortality of the soul (ibid. 141–45 ad IV.21). But these areas of conflict were so few in number that they are overwhelmed by the vast areas of agreement which Gataker identifies – aided, at times, by the eye of faith. The belief which underlies this attitude is expressed in his commentary on Marcus's statement that there is one universe, one God, and one truth; Gataker uses this passage to attack those who argue that there is one truth for theology and another for philosophy (ibid. 263–64 ad VII.9). A large part of his 'Preliminary Discourse' ('*Praeloq[u]ium*') is devoted to proving that, of all philosophies, it was Stoicism which coincided most closely with the truths of Christianity. Of the triumvirate of late Stoics, Gataker ranks Seneca below Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, claiming that he is no match for them either in word or deed. He then goes even further, declaring that no surviving works of

pagan antiquity come nearer to the doctrine of Christ than the Greek writings of Epictetus and, above all, Marcus Aurelius (ibid. ***3v–4r). After listing a number of Christ’s teachings – about abstaining from evil, even in thought, turning the other cheek and so on – Gataker concludes:

These same precepts are to be found in Antoninus, just as if he were in the habit of reading them. They are interspersed throughout his collection of thoughts and meditations, and are repeatedly instilled with a remarkable strength and vigour that pierces to the bottom of the heart.

Yet why, he asks, read these precepts in the work of someone who was a stranger to, indeed an enemy of, Christianity? In the first place, Gataker maintains, because Marcus Aurelius provides fuller and more detailed explanations of Christ’s brief maxims than can be found in the Gospels; and, second, because the *Meditations* allow us to discern the perfect agreement of Christian doctrine with reason (ibid. ***4v–****1r).

The concord of reason and faith was the theme of Pierre-Daniel Huet’s *Alnetanae quaestiones* of 1690. A former Cartesian enthusiast now turned critic, Huet had six years previously been named a bishop, first of Soissons and later of Avranches (Guellouz (1994)), and in this treatise he deployed all his formidable humanist learning to illustrate

the agreement between human reason, which the pagans used as their sole guide to knowledge of the truth, and divine faith, by means of which those devoted to Christ grasp the truth. (Huet (1690) 93)

He calls Marcus Aurelius ‘holiest of all the heathens’ (‘ethnicorum omnium sanctissimus’; ibid. 169); and the *Meditations* provide him with much valuable evidence for the consensus of pagan and Christian doctrines on matters such as guardian angels, human free will, humility, chastity, and Christ’s injunction to love one’s enemies (ibid. 135, 169, 335, 357, 417). Huet does not mention any modern authorities in this treatise; but a copy of Gataker’s edition held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (J. 3512) bears his arms and has annotations in his hand.

The custom of not citing contemporary scholars was also followed by two of Huet’s former collaborators on the *ad usum Delphini* editions of the classics: the husband and wife team of André and Anne Dacier (Farnham (1976) 97–101). It is clear, however, from the notes to their French translation of the *Meditations*, published from 1690 to 1691, that they were aware of Gataker’s edition, which was well known and highly regarded on mainland Europe. Francesco Barberini, in the preface to his Italian translation of the *Meditations*, had proclaimed that Gataker’s annotations ‘left nothing to be desired’ (‘non

resta, che desiderare') – although the *cardinal nipote* of Urban VIII was offended by Gataker's occasional Puritan swipes at the Catholic Church (Marcus Aurelius (1675) R2v). A further sign of Gataker's Europe-wide reputation was the re-issuing of his edition of the *Meditations* in the first volume of his *Opera critica et philologica*, published in Utrecht in 1697.

The Daciers, like Gataker and Huet, emphasized the closeness of Stoic ethics to the morality of the Gospels. Allowing that the Stoics were justly censured for a small number of their doctrines – their polytheism, ignorance of original sin and belief in the legitimacy of suicide – they nevertheless asserted that, after the Holy Scriptures, Stoic maxims were the most valuable reading matter for anyone seeking to live according to justice and make good use of his reason. And among Stoic philosophers, Marcus Aurelius held pride of place, being almost as superior to Seneca and Epictetus in the beauty of his writings as he was in lineage and wealth (Marcus Aurelius (1690–1691) I: e2r–v). This was not least because his *Réflexions morales*, the title the Daciers gave to the *Meditations*, disproved many of the unfair criticisms which had been made of the Stoics. Marcus showed, for instance, that they did not want to eliminate compassion but rather keep it within reasonable bounds; it was only excessive, useless, and ineffective compassion which they condemned (ibid. II: 414–15). His writings also proved that, far from being corrupted by *amour propre*, the Stoics held that man's primary and principal responsibility was to love his neighbor (ibid. I: _1^r). As for Marcus Aurelius himself, he had never been personally involved in the persecution of Christians during his rule; and his criticism of their irrational and obstinate desire for martyrdom was the result of his inability, as a pagan, to perceive the superhuman rationality which moved them (ibid. II: 673–74).

The views of the Daciers and to a lesser extent those of Huet were quoted and endorsed by Joannes Franciscus Buddeus, a Lutheran professor of theology at Jena (Santinello (1979) II: 373–406), in the preface to his Greek–Latin edition of the *Meditations*, published in 1729, and based on a 1704 Oxford reprint of Gataker's text and translation. The title of Buddeus's preface, 'Introduction to Stoic Philosophy according to the Mind and Thought of Emperor Marcus Aurelius' ('Introductio ad Stoicam philosophiam ex mente sententiaque Marci Aurelii Antonini Imp[eratoris]') reveals how important a document the *Meditations* had become for the study of Stoicism. Buddeus, who in 1704, as a young professor of moral philosophy at Halle, had chosen to give his very first public lectures on the *Meditations*, states that he wrote this introduction because he noticed that Lipsius and others who had written on Stoic philosophy had paid little or no attention to the work (Marcus Aurelius (1729) 4–5). He dwells considerably more than Gataker, Huet, or the Daciers on the errors of the Stoics, particularly in relation to their religious views (ibid. 26, 34–35); but he finds much that agrees with Christianity in their ethics: Marcus Aurelius's

contempt for worldly glory (ibid. 112), for instance, and his teaching that we should love even our enemies and those who have harmed us (ibid. 124). Interestingly, Buddeus suggests that Marcus's belief that the soul brings shame on itself when it succumbs to the passions of pleasure and pain 'is not all that different from the views of certain recent thinkers, in particular those of René Descartes' ('praesertim Renati Cartesii'), who thinks that there is no better remedy for the passions of the soul than generosity, since it is the key to all virtues and therefore battles more forcefully against the vices of the emotions (ibid. 75 ad II.12).

In 1742, Francis Hutcheson, professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow and one of the central figures in the Scottish Enlightenment, brought out an English-language translation of the *Meditations*, in collaboration with the Greek scholar James Moor. According to Hutcheson, the 'pious and charitable meditations' of Marcus Aurelius contained

some of the plainest, and yet most striking considerations, to affect the hearts of those who have any sense of goodness, and warm them with the noblest emotions, of piety, gratitude, and resignation to GOD; contempt of sexual pleasure, wealth, worldly grandeur, and fame; and a constant inflexible charity, and good-will and compassion toward our fellows.

They therefore provided powerful support for the connection between virtue and benevolence, one of the central doctrines in Hutcheson's moral sense theory (Marcus Aurelius (2008) xvii–xxii, 3). Marcus was also a classical author who was in fundamental agreement with Christianity, as Hutcheson indicated in his notes, by pointing out frequent parallels with the New Testament. The Christian Stoicism promoted in this edition is greatly indebted to Thomas Gataker, who is cited in the notes and two sections of whose 'Preliminary Discourse' are printed, in English translation, as an appendix to the text: the 'Maxims of the Stoics' and what is entitled his 'Apology for employing, tho' a Christian minister, so many year's time and labour on these Meditations of a Heathen Emperor, under whose reign the Christians suffered persecution' (ibid. 155–64). Hutcheson himself noted that since there was no evidence that Marcus personally gave any orders to persecute Christians, he was less guilty than 'the apostle Paul, who himself persecuted with great fury' (ibid. 19).

An earlier translation of Gataker's 'Preliminary Discourse' had already appeared in print, in Jeremy Collier's English version of the *Meditations*, first published in 1701 and given the title *The Emperor Marcus Antoninus His Conversation with Himself*. Collier, a former minister and outspoken Jacobite, had become notorious for his attacks on the immorality of the plays of Dryden and Congreve (Matthew and Harrison (2004) XII: 640–45). He apparently felt embarrassed by Gataker's overtly Christian reading of the *Meditations*, for his

translation of the 'Discourse' stops precisely at the point where the 'Apology' printed by Hutcheson and Moor begins. Explaining why he had done this, Collier wrote:

Thus far I have Translated the Learned Gataker, who proceeds in his Prolegomena, to draw a Parallel between the Doctrines of Our Blessed Saviour, and those of Marcus Antoninus in many considerable Instances, insomuch that one wou'd imagine the Emperor had Transcribed part of his Philosophy from the four Evangelists.

Believing that this part of the preface was 'foreign to our purpose', he left it out of his translation (Marcus Aurelius (1708) 35).

A much less ambiguous rejection of Gataker's Christian interpretation of the *Meditations* appeared in Jacob Brucker's monumental *Critical History of Philosophy* (*Historia critica philosophiae*), first published in the 1740s (Schmidt-Biggemann and Stammen (1998); Santinello (1979) 529–635). For Brucker, who had studied at Jena under Buddeus, the indiscriminate mingling of pagan and Christian notions was an offence not only to his unrivalled philosophical erudition but also to his deep Lutheran piety. In an earlier work, he had warned that comparisons between pagan philosophies such as Stoicism, and the Christian religion, though not without value, had to be carried out cautiously, soberly and with the greatest care (Brucker (1729) 1–49). This theme was taken up in a later essay entitled *On the Stoics, Cunning Imitators of the Christians* ('*De Stoicis subdolis Christianorum imitatoribus*'; Brucker (1748) 225–57). Offering an explanation as to why the late Stoics seemed to be so much closer to Christianity than the earlier ones, Brucker argued that Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius – the *triga*, or three-horsed chariot, of Stoics who lived in the period after the birth of Christ (ibid. 232) – had deliberately and deceitfully adopted both the language and the doctrines of the Christian religion, especially those concerned with moral philosophy, in order to raise the standing of their sect and improve its reputation, tarnished by accusations of hypocrisy. Their fraudulent aping of Christianity had been so successful that scholars such as Justus Lipsius, Thomas Gataker, and Pierre-Daniel Huet, looking only at the glossy surface of late Stoic writings and paying insufficient attention to the impiety and atheism at their core, had been taken in by the ruse (232, 239–40, 247). The evidence for the compatibility of late Stoicism with Christianity compiled by Lipsius, Thomas Gataker, and other Neostoics was now marshaled by Brucker to prove the extent of the deception.

In the first volume of his *Critical History of Philosophy*, Brucker deals with the school's early Greek phase, which, thanks to the scholarship of Lipsius and other Neostoic humanists, had become much better known. His lengthy and

detailed exposition of Stoic philosophy from Zeno to Posidonius highlights its deep-seated materialism, determinism, and atheism (Brucker (1766–1767) I: 893–981). He gives a much shorter and largely biographical account of late Stoicism in the second volume (*ibid.* II: 531–99), as part of the section on the philosophy of the Romans, whom Brucker, echoing Horace (*Epistles* II.1.156), maintains added nothing at all to the earlier philosophical achievements of the Greeks: ‘politically defeated by the Romans, Greece emerged as the conqueror of the Roman mind’ (‘devicta a Romanis, Graecia ingeniorum Romanorum evasit victrix’; *ibid.* 46–47). He also rehearses his earlier allegation that the Stoics of this era duplicitously imitated Christian rhetoric and adopted certain Christian doctrines in order to enhance the appeal of their philosophy (*ibid.* 574). In the fourth volume, which goes up to his own day, Brucker once again laments that the restorers of ancient Stoicism, starting with Lipsius, were so dazzled by the superficial resemblance of late Stoic thought to Christian theology that they lost sight of the doctrines harmful to religion on which the entire philosophy was constructed (*ibid.* IV.1: 486–502). Brucker particularly wishes that the formidably learned Thomas Gataker, whose commentary he admired in other respects (*ibid.* II: 597 note b, 578 note e), had not tried to identify parallels between the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius and the Holy Scriptures, since, duped by the splendid words of the Stoics, he often found St. Paul himself in the Stoa (*ibid.* IV.1: 501–502).

The article on ‘Stoicisme’, which appeared in the great *Encyclopédie* (1751–1780) of the French Enlightenment, was written by Denis Diderot. Entirely devoted to the early Greek Stoics, it is essentially a boiled-down version of the account in the first volume of Brucker’s *Critical History of Philosophy*, portraying these philosophers as ‘materialists, determinists and, properly speaking, atheists’ (‘matérialistes, fatalistes, et à proprement parler, athées’; Diderot (1775–1777) XVI: 215). At the end, after discussing Panaetius and Posidonius, Diderot suggests that readers interested in finding out about the history of the Stoic sect under the Republic and Empire should consult another article, also written by him, on the ‘Philosophy of the Romans’ (*ibid.* 228). In this short piece, which mirrors Brucker’s dismissive attitude towards the intellectual achievements of the Romans – ‘in philosophy, these masters of the world were no more than schoolboys’ (‘qu’en philosophie, les maîtres du monde n’ont été que des écoliers’; *ibid.* 34) – there is no mention of either Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius. Diderot does not repeat the accusation that the late Stoics shrewdly imitated the Christians; but, in his brief account of the chief figures in the Neostoic movement, he follows Brucker in mocking the otherwise learned Gataker because ‘he often sees Jesus Christ, St. Paul, the Evangelists and the Church Fathers in the Stoa’ (‘Il voit souvent Jésus-Christ, saint Paul, les évangélistes, les Pères sous le Portique’; *ibid.* 231). In contrast, however, to Brucker, who condemned the Christian interpretation of Stoicism

in order to defend religion from the dangers of pagan impiety, Diderot's aim was to free philosophy from religious superstition and prejudice.

Despite Diderot's dismissal of the Christian interpretation of the *Meditations*, it was not abruptly abandoned but instead lingered on, only gradually fading away. In an essay of 1863, Matthew Arnold could still suggest that the ethics of Marcus Aurelius 'reminds one of Christian morality' (Arnold (1914) 201). By this time, however, such a view was out of step with contemporary academic scholarship on ancient philosophy. Marcus Aurelius and other late Roman Stoics, who had been at the centre of the early modern Neostoic revival, to a large extent because of their perceived agreement with Christianity, were now considered to be merely derivative followers of the early Greek Stoics, whose atheism, materialism, and determinism no longer prevented them from being regarded as the school's most creative and significant thinkers.

NOTE

- * This chapter is essentially an abridged version of Kraye (2000), which should be consulted for further references and for additional quotations from primary sources; the text has, however, been revised and updated in light of recent scholarly literature, and new material has been included.

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CHAPTER 34

Marcus Aurelius in Contemporary Philosophy

John Sellars

1. Modern Readers of the *Meditations*

The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius have been relatively neglected by philosophers during the 19th and 20th centuries, even though throughout this period Marcus has attracted a considerable number of general readers. The practical ethical issues with which the *Meditations* are concerned have not resonated with the dominant themes in philosophy over the last two centuries, although this is perhaps beginning to change now, after the rise of both virtue ethics and practical ethics in the late 20th century. Nevertheless, Marcus has attracted some interest from philosophers and other intellectuals, both positive and negative. The next two sections offer an overview of the reception of the *Meditations* in the 19th and then the 20th century. The final section offers some remarks about future reception.

2. The 19th Century

After a period of sustained popularity during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, Hellenistic and Roman philosophy fell into a period of relative neglect in the early 19th century and attention turned back to their Hellenic predecessors. Just one expression of this devaluation of Hellenistic philosophy can be found in G.W.F. Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, where he criticizes Stoicism and Epicureanism for replacing an attitude of genuine speculation with a rigid moral system that mechanically applies rules (Hegel

(1993–1996) 19: 255, (1894) 2: 237). This attitude of philosophical skepticism about the value of Stoicism as a philosophy is echoed in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and, although he is not explicitly named, Marcus Aurelius is clearly brought to mind in one of the opening sections of the *Phenomenology*. There, in an account of the development of self-consciousness out of a dialectic between lordship and bondage, Hegel turns briefly to consider Stoicism. According to Hegel, our sense of self develops only through an encounter and contrast with other conscious beings. Because our self-consciousness is dependent upon these encounters, we find ourselves in need of others, but at the same time we resist being dominated by them. Thus each subject seeks to keep others close but also to control them, and vice versa, creating a continual battle for the status of master and slave (Hegel (1993–1996) 3: 145–55, (1977) 111–19). Hegel goes on to suggest that Stoicism in effect tries to escape this continual conflict between subjects by downplaying the significance of the human body. The Stoic withdraws into his consciousness, denying both that the actions of the other are important and that their own body is important. The Stoic does not care whether he is a political slave or not, for in his own mind he remains free. The Stoic practices an absolute freedom of the mind but is indifferent to the freedom of the body and all external circumstances. This sort of indifference is famously illustrated in Origen's anecdote about Epictetus' indifference towards whether his master broke his leg or not (*Contra Celsum* 7.53), highlighting the Stoic's complete autonomy in the face of any external situation. Hegel's charge against Stoicism is that this type of inner freedom is no real freedom at all (Hegel (1993–1996) 3: 155–59, (1977) 119–22).

It is this indifference to external circumstances that means that Stoicism can appeal to people in all social circumstances, Hegel suggests, including both masters and slaves. Although he does not name them explicitly, it seems clear that here Hegel is thinking of the Stoics Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, whose social positions could not have been more different. Marcus' retreat into a realm of pure thought – his 'inner citadel' as he calls it (8.48) – is for Hegel a denial of the importance of external social relations and merely a symptom of the times in which he lived (see Hegel (1993–1996) 12: 398, (1890) 329).

Another reader of Marcus Aurelius, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), had a more complex relationship with Stoicism. While on the one hand he questioned the coherence of the Stoic ideal of living according to Nature (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse* §9, in Nietzsche (1999) 5: 21–22), on the other he admired the ethical outlook of Epictetus, presenting it as a noble and almost aristocratic attitude of indifference towards others that compared favorably with the Christian morality he so despised (*Morgenröte* § 546, in Nietzsche (1999) 3: 316–17). In the light of this one might expect Nietzsche to have warmed to the *Meditations*, given the emperor's debt to Epictetus, but instead he had

little positive to say about them, and what he did say remained unpublished in his notebooks. They are, for him, laughable (a 'komisches Buch', Nietzsche (1999) 11: 147) and full of pompous ideals such as wisdom, righteousness, and selflessness (Nietzsche (1999) 12: 298). Nietzsche seemed unable to scratch beneath the surface and recognize Marcus' significant debt to the noble Epictetus.

In France we find another 19th century reader of Marcus Aurelius, Ernest Renan (1823–1892), famous for his *Vie de Jésus* (1863) and remembered by historians of philosophy for his *Averroès et l'averroïsme* (1852). The seventh and final volume of his *Histoire des origines du Christianisme*, published in 1882 under the title *Marc-Aurèle et la fin du monde antique*, was devoted to the development of the Church under the reign of Marcus Aurelius but has much to say about Marcus' philosophy along the way. According to Renan, the second century saw both the consolidation of Christianity and, in Marcus himself, the culmination of pagan virtue. Marcus summed up 'all that there was of goodness in the ancient world' and his *Meditations* form 'a personal document of uncontested sincerity and authenticity' (Renan (1947–1961) 5: 737, (1904) ix). Both the weakness and the strength of the *Meditations* is that 'there is no trace of system': thus 'Marcus Aurelius, properly speaking, has no philosophy', but 'his moral system, being thus free from all bonds with a system, achieves a singular loftiness' (Renan (1947–1961) 5: 907, (1904) 128). Renan suggests that part of the attractiveness of the *Meditations* is that it is 'the most purely human book that has ever been' (Renan (1947–1961) 5: 907, (1904) 129), speaking to the universal human condition in a way that transcends boundaries of time, culture, or religion. However, it is not without its faults, and Renan argues that the price one has to pay to follow the *Meditations* to its lofty goals may be too high: 'humility, renunciation, severity towards one's self have never been pushed farther' (Renan (1947–1961) 5: 913, (1904) 134). Even so, the book stands as a timeless and incomparable 'gospel of those who have no faith in the supernatural' (Renan (1947–1961) 5: 913, (1904) 134). For Renan, then, although Marcus' ethics is attractive, his metaphysics stands in stark contrast to Christianity. Nevertheless the *Meditations* remains an admirable book, recommended to Christian and non-Christian alike.

On the other side of the channel Marcus found many admirers in the 19th century. In the second chapter of *On Liberty* John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), described Marcus as 'the best and most enlightened among his contemporaries' and the *Meditations* as 'the highest ethical product of the ancient mind' (Mill (1859) 48–49). His admiration for the *Meditations*, however, follows the 16th and 17th century Neostoic line: the *Meditations* are admirable precisely because they 'differ scarcely perceptibly, if they differ at all, from the most characteristic teachings of Christ' (Mill (1859) 49). For Mill, Marcus is a

Christian in his ethics even if he does not accept the metaphysics, and his ethics is to be admired notwithstanding the fact that Marcus persecuted Christians of his own day in the name of political stability.

This broadly Neostoic interpretation of Marcus was shared by much of the subsequent reception of the *Meditations* in Victorian England. Just a few years after Mill's *On Liberty*, Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) published an essay on Marcus Aurelius (in 1863; reprinted in a collection of essays in 1865), prompted by the appearance the year before of George Long's translation of the *Meditations*, in part a review essay of Long's version, and often reprinted as an appendix in subsequent editions of Long's work. Arnold opens his essay with a reference to Mill's *On Liberty*, although not to Mill's comments about Marcus. Mill had claimed that Christian morality was merely a negative reaction against pagan morality rather than a positive system in its own right and Arnold responds to this by arguing that any genuinely successful morality requires an emotional element to engage its audience; this is where Christian morality trumps the excessively rationalistic moralities of pagan antiquity. By way of example, Arnold suggests that the austere and uncompromising moral outlook of a late Stoic such as Epictetus is too much for the majority of humankind to stomach. What Epictetus offers, noble as it may be, is only 'for the strong, for the few' (Arnold (1865) 272).

This does not sound too promising for Arnold's assessment of Marcus Aurelius but in fact Arnold goes on to argue that while Epictetus' version of Stoic ethics is too harsh and unemotional, the great strength of Marcus is that he combines what is most valuable in Stoic ethics with an emotional sensibility of the sort that we find in religions such as Christianity (Arnold (1865) 274):

That which gives to the moral writings of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius their peculiar character and charm, is their being suffused and softened by something of this very sentiment whence Christian morality draws its best power.

Indeed, Arnold's praise for Marcus seemingly knows no bounds: he is 'perhaps the most beautiful figure in history' and the *Meditations* are 'a short masterpiece on morals' (Arnold (1865) 279 and 278). This praise is a direct consequence of Arnold's view that Marcus' ethical outlook shares much with Christian morality and the key to this harmony between the two is the emotional accent that Arnold contends runs through the *Meditations*. This makes them both more attractive and more effective than the ethical works of Seneca and Epictetus (Arnold (1865) 292). It is worth noting here that Arnold's argument is primarily concerned with form rather than content: he is not suggesting any substantial doctrinal variation between the three late Stoic authors, merely the way in which they present their central ideas. Precisely because the mass of humankind are not already

thoroughly rational sages, the best way to engage them in moral progress is to tap into their emotional lives rather than offer cold statements of doctrine. With Marcus we inevitably do not completely depart from the austerity of the Stoic outlook but it is certainly made palatable and what he offers is a view of the world that falls somewhere in between the extremes of resignation and joy (ibid.). Whereas Epictetus is 'bleak and grey', Marcus is 'imaginative, fresh, and striking' (Arnold (1865) 272 and 297).

One fact that upsets Arnold's eulogy for Marcus is the latter's persecution of early Christians and Arnold goes to some lengths to explain this away, arguing that Marcus' conception of Christianity would have been partial and misleading. Marcus was justified in his actions given what he knew, although in fact he knew very little. Arnold suggests that had Marcus known the true nature of Christianity he would have acknowledged his kinship with it and perhaps even converted, writing 'what an affinity for Christianity had this persecutor of the Christians!' (Arnold (1865) 302). Arnold ends his essay speculating on what might have been if Marcus had encountered the Gospels.

Arnold was by no means alone in presenting Marcus as almost a Christian moralist *avant la lettre*. A similar example can be found in *Seekers after God*, a work first published in 1868 by F.W. Farrar (1831–1903), who went on to become Dean of Canterbury. Farrar's three seekers after God are Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus, all of whom exhibit many worthy Christian values thanks to the invisible workings of the Holy Spirit. Farrar's account is of limited intrinsic value today but it illustrates, alongside Mill and Arnold, the Christianized reading of Marcus Aurelius that dominated in late 19th century England.

Of these various readings of Marcus in the 19th century we might note that both Nietzsche and Arnold propose a similar contrast between Marcus and Epictetus: while Epictetus is the austere rationalist, Marcus offers a softer approach more in tune with Christian thought. Inevitably Nietzsche and Arnold disagree over which of our two late Stoics is more attractive in the light of this but nevertheless the structural contrast is broadly the same. It is striking that in the 19th century those who engaged explicitly with the *Meditations* simply continued the early modern debate over the extent to which the Stoicism of the *Meditations* might or might not be brought into harmony with Christian thinking.

3. The 20th Century

Marcus seems to have found even fewer philosophical readers in the 20th century. The dominant concerns of philosophers in both the Anglo-American and European traditions shared little in common with the preoccupations of

the emperor. One might have expected Marcus' reflections on death, finitude, and the human condition to strike a chord with philosophers of an existentialist bent although there appear to be no extended engagements with the *Meditations* among those thinkers.

One mid-century philosopher who, like Hegel, probably was reading Marcus Aurelius although doesn't name him, is Isaiah Berlin (1909–1997). Berlin's principal discussion of Stoicism can be found in his 1958 inaugural lecture *Two Concepts of Liberty*. Like Hegel, Berlin is concerned with the wider implications of turning oneself into an 'inner citadel', viewing this as a potentially dangerous form of positive freedom. In contrast to conceptions of negative freedom from interference, images of positive freedom construct an ideal of rational autonomy that can survive any and every circumstance. Berlin's concern, echoing Hegel, is that this encourages people to downplay the importance of the social and political situation in which they find themselves. According to Berlin, Stoicism was one of the first philosophies to offer a positive notion of freedom and, implicitly drawing on Marcus, Berlin calls it a 'retreat to the inner citadel' (Berlin (1958) 19). Marcus and the other Stoics effectively split themselves in two in the attempt to gain complete control over themselves, Berlin claims (Berlin (1958) 19):

The 'positive' conception of freedom as self-mastery, with its suggestion of a man divided against himself, has in fact, and as a matter of history, of doctrine and of practice, lent itself more easily to this splitting of personality into two: the transcendent, dominant controller, and the empirical bundle of desires and passions to be disciplined and brought to heel.

Once again echoing Hegel, Berlin suggests that this attitude is in part simply a product of political situations in which the individual feels powerless over their own life, such as the Hellenistic period after the decline of the *polis* or the Roman Empire (Berlin (1958) 24). On this account the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius merely record a deluded attempt to achieve complete inner autonomy rather than face up to and deal with the very real external pressures generating the anxiety with which Marcus was struggling.

A quite different approach to the *Meditations* can be found in the later work of Michel Foucault (1926–1984). Initially conceived as a project charting the history of sexuality, Foucault's late work soon transformed into a much wider concern with notions of the self, especially in Hellenistic and Roman thought, and it was within this context that he read Marcus alongside Seneca, Epictetus, Plutarch, and others. References to Marcus can be found throughout these late works, but the most sustained discussion is in one of lectures that made up his 1981–1982 lecture course *L'herméneutique du sujet* (Foucault (2001) 277–97, (2005) 289–311).

Foucault's concern in this lecture is with what he calls the 'spiritual modalization of knowledge' (*modalisation spirituelle du savoir*) in the *Meditations* (Foucault (2001) 278, (2005) 290). This is part of a wider concern with the role of knowledge, and especially knowledge of the external world, in late Stoic practices concerned with the self. Foucault's wider point here is that the turn inwards initiated by a project of 'care of the self' need not lead to indifference about the external world and, in fact, depends upon the relationship between self and external world. This, albeit implicitly, is a reply to the Hegelian caricature of Stoicism as an isolationist inner retreat.

Foucault begins by suggesting that there is a marked contrast between what we find in Seneca and what we find in the *Meditations*. Whereas Seneca's practices of the self are built upon viewing the self from above, as an isolated element within a larger frame, Marcus by contrast is more concerned with focusing in on the details and inner workings of things. Both philosophers build their spiritual practices upon knowledge of the external world, but they do so on knowledge of different types (*ibid.*). In support of this claim Foucault cites 6.3 and 3.11 but he overlooks many other passages where Marcus does explicitly engage in the sort of cosmic perspective articulated by Seneca (in the preface to book 1 of the *Natural Questions*), such as 12.32, 9.30, 7.48, 12.24, and many others. The contrast that Foucault tries to make here does not quite stand up.

Nevertheless the detailed examination of things that Foucault highlights is certainly also present in the *Meditations*. Much of Foucault's subsequent account is based upon a close reading of 3.11, displaying many of the virtues of close textual reading but, as we have just seen, running the risk of making general claims about Marcus' philosophy on the basis of a single paragraph. The paragraph in question opens with an injunction to analyze our impressions, giving a definition and description of the content of each one (a theme common with a number of other passages in the *Meditations*):

Always make a definition or sketch of what presents itself to your mind, so you can see it stripped bare to its essential nature and identify it clearly, in whole and in all its parts, and can tell yourself its proper name and the names of those elements of which it is compounded and into which it will be dissolved.

This for Foucault is the essence of a spiritual exercise: the analysis of impressions or representations. He goes on to suggest that, in this passage at least, it is possible to distinguish between two types of meditation at work: eidetic meditation and onomastic meditation (Foucault (2001) 282, (2005) 294). First, the eidetic meditation involves grasping objects as they are in their essence, stripped of their conventional significance. Thus at 9.36 (translation from Hammond (2006) 90):

The rotting of the base material of everything. Water, dust, bones, stench. Again: marble is a mere deposit in the earth, gold and silver mere sediments; your clothing is animal hair, your purple is fish blood; and so on with all else. And the vital spirit is just the same, changing from this to that.

A further aspect of this analysis involves reducing the same objects to their constituent parts, for the same end. Then, claims Foucault, the onomastic meditation involves articulating this inner nature of the object to oneself, naming it and saying its name, in order to bring home the results of the first part of the exercise. This process of articulation also serves to help memorization. A final function of this sort of analysis is to show us the future facing the object in question, for by reducing it to its constituent parts in thought, and naming those parts, we grasp what will happen to the object when it is finally destroyed and resolved back into the flux of matter.

Foucault's language here is a little imprecise: sometimes he refers to examining representations, sometimes examining and testing objects (cf. Foucault (2001) 282f., (2005) 294, 296). What he presumably means here is the testing of impressions that Marcus refers to at 8.13 (Foucault's use of *représentation* for *phantasia* introduces an unhelpful complication). However, far more central in the *Meditations* is his focus on examining (and keeping in check) one's judgments about impressions rather than the impressions themselves (see e.g. 5.26, 8.47, 8.49). Foucault's desire to show that Marcus' philosophy is not totally inward-looking perhaps leads him to place too much stress on objects when in fact Marcus is more concerned with judgments. The desire to encounter objects stripped back is ultimately a desire to encounter them free from the typical judgments that people add to their impressions. Marcus' principal concern is with those judgments that color our impressions (see Sellars (2003) 154–63). Thus when Foucault suggests that Marcus' project involves 'adopting an attitude towards these representations of surveillance and mistrust, and trying to check and test each one' (Foucault (2001) 287, (2005) 299) he neglects to make clear that the reason why these representations or impressions require this checking is because they may have been tainted with a judgment added by us (cf. 8.49).

Foucault goes on to contrast the Stoic analysis with the early Christian examination of representations, suggesting that while Marcus and other Stoics were concerned with examining the external world, early Christians such as Cassian (circa 360–425) were more concerned with inward-looking self-examination (see Foucault (2001) 288, (2005) 301). As we have seen, the Stoic case is perhaps more complex than Foucault suggests and so consequently the contrast between Stoic and early Christian practices of examination is not as sharp as he claims. (For a smoother account of the movement from Stoicism to Christianity, stressing gradual development rather than sharp division, see Sorabji (2000) and (2004).)

Foucault's late work on ancient philosophy took some of its inspiration from ideas articulated by Pierre Hadot, especially Hadot's account of spiritual exercises, first published in 1981 (see Foucault (2001) 280, (2005) 292). Later Hadot published a monograph on Marcus Aurelius, in 1992, as well as the first part of a new critical edition of the text, in 1998. However, in the English-speaking world it has been through the volume *Philosophy as a Way of Life* that Hadot's work in general, and on Marcus Aurelius in particular, has reached a wider non-specialist audience. In this volume Hadot presents the *Meditations* as a spiritual exercise (Hadot (1995) 179–205). His principal concern is to defend the *Meditations* as a serious piece of philosophy against caricatures that present it as merely diary jottings ripe for psychological analysis. We should not, Hadot argues, treat the *Meditations* as a window into the soul of their author; nor should we take their sometimes unusual imagery as evidence for drug-taking as some have claimed (see e.g. Africa (1961)). Instead Hadot presents Marcus as engaged in a series of active intellectual exercises, designed to transform his experience of and relationship with the world (Hadot (1995) 186):

Marcus' seemingly pessimistic declarations are not expressions of his disgust or disillusion at the spectacle of life; rather, they are a *means* he employs in order to change his way of evaluating the events and objects which go to make up human existence.

Like Foucault, Hadot stresses that Marcus' project is thoroughly Stoic but, unlike Foucault, he rightly goes on also to stress that this method 'consists in refusing to add subjective value-judgements' (Hadot (1995) 187) to our impressions (see e.g. 8.47, 8.49). Value judgments about external objects must always be mistaken for a Stoic, given that the Stoic holds that only virtue possesses any inherent positive value.

For Hadot, this concern with impressions and judgments must be placed within a wider context. Drawing a distinction between theoretical philosophical discourse and lived philosophy, Hadot argues that the *Meditations* must be seen as part of philosophy conceived as a living practice (Hadot (1995) 192). In particular, Hadot sees the *Meditations* as an attempt to put into practice Epictetus' three *topoi*: the disciplines of desire, inclinations, and judgment (see Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.2.1–2). Hadot suggests that these three areas of exercise correspond to the three traditional parts of Stoic philosophical discourse: logic, physics, and ethics (see Sellars (2003) 134–42). Thus, rather than being merely a personal diary of unsystematic reflections, the *Meditations* form part of a deliberate and conscious philosophical program (Hadot (1995) 201):

Each time Marcus wrote down one of his *Meditations*, he knew exactly what he was doing: he was exhorting himself to practice one of the disciplines: either that of desire, of action, or of assent. At the same time, he was exhorting himself to practice philosophy itself, in its divisions of physics, ethics, and logic.

Hadot's aim, then, fleshed out in more detail elsewhere (Hadot (1992) and (1998)), is to present the *Meditations* as a properly philosophical text. The emphasis in Hadot's reading (and, following him, Foucault) is on the procedures and techniques at work in the text rather than the details of its Stoic-inspired content.

4. Rehabilitating Marcus

It should perhaps come as no great surprise that Marcus Aurelius has not attracted more attention from philosophical readers, just as it is no great surprise to find his work so popular among general readers. As I have noted, part of this is no doubt due to the fact that Marcus does not engage explicitly with the philosophical topics that have dominated philosophy during the last two centuries. However, in the light of the criticisms raised by Hegel and Berlin, there may be another reason to bear in mind too, namely that the philosophical position articulated by Marcus and the other later Stoics has been seen as simply unattractive. This view is articulated by Bernard Williams (a friend and admirer of Berlin), who comments that (Williams (1993) 115):

Later antiquity seems rather to have given up the question of slavery as a problem in political philosophy in favour of edifying attempts to show that slavery was not really harmful to the slave; in particular, that real freedom was freedom of the spirit, and that this could be attained as well, perhaps better, by slaves. One of the most explicit, certainly one of the more repulsive, expositions of this attitude is offered by Seneca.

Williams raises this as an objection against Seneca but one can easily imagine the same point being made against Marcus or Epictetus. A recurrent theme in the reception of Marcus Aurelius and late Stoicism, articulated by Hegel, Berlin, and Williams, and no doubt held by others, is that their philosophy involves a defensive retreat inwards in the face of adversity and a redescription of oneself in order not only to justify the retreat but even to present it as a form of freedom. Thus the Stoic, so the criticism goes, denies that his body is part of his essential self so that he can claim to be free even when his body is in chains.

The criticism, then, is that Marcus and the late Stoics engage in a process of psychological rationalization, adapting their desires in the face of external circumstances in order to guarantee their autonomy (cf. Zimmerman (2000) with Inwood (2005) 253).

This sort of philosophical objection to the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius and the other later Stoics does not, however, stand up to close scrutiny. Much work has been done recently to show that this sort of philosophical caricature is not supported by a balanced and careful reading of the works of Seneca or Epictetus (see Inwood (2005) and Long (2002) respectively) and I suggest that careful attention to the *Meditations* will show that it does not stand for Marcus Aurelius either. By way of example, Marcus' own position reflects his commitment to Stoic value theory (see e.g. 2.11, 7.31), for which the Stoics gave a number of arguments (recorded in Diogenes Laertius 7.103–104). Thus the Stoics argued that because externals such as wealth and health can be used both well and badly they cannot be inherently valuable, and in this the Stoics followed the Socrates of Plato's *Euthydemus* (esp. 278e–281e). To this Marcus adds an argument of his own: at 2.11 he suggests that if we accept the existence of Providence then there is no way that externals such as wealth and poverty can have any positive value, for these things are distributed randomly to the deserving and undeserving alike. The fact that they are so distributed shows that they cannot possess any genuine value:

The nature of the Whole would not have been blind to this, either through ignorance or with knowledge unaccompanied by the power to prevent and put right. Nor would it have made so great an error, through lack of power or skill, as to have good and bad falling indiscriminately, on good and bad people alike. Yes, death and life, fame and ignominy, pain and pleasure, wealth and poverty – all these come to good and bad alike, but they are not in themselves either right or wrong: neither then are they inherent good or evil.

Naturally few modern philosophers are likely to embrace the Stoic conception of Providence on which this argument depends but nevertheless it is worth noting that Marcus here does offer an independent argument for his indifference to externals. His position, then, clearly is not the product of a psychological rationalization in the face of unpleasant external circumstances but rather a considered philosophical position. As Marcus receives more attention from specialists and the details of his position become clearer, the old caricatures that have shaped much of the recent reception will no longer be tenable. Once this has been achieved the *Meditations* might once again be read with profit by philosophers.

FURTHER READING

Little has been written directly on the recent reception of Marcus Aurelius but the following studies put my remarks into a wider context. Hegel's engagement with Stoicism is discussed in Gourinat (2005). Renan's work on Marcus Aurelius is discussed briefly in Spanneut ((1973) 355–57). Foucault's late work has received much comment; an extended discussion can be found in McGushin (2007).

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